The Beaver

A MAGAZINE OF THE NORTH

OUTFIT 276
MARCH 1946

PUBLISHED QUARTERLY BY
Hudson's Bay Company.
INCORPORATED 2ND MAY 1670

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ONE DOLLAR A YEAR

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MISSION TO MUSKO

Apprentice John Sinclair, making his first dog-team trip, in quest of a wild silver fox, had occasion to change his mind about the romance of the fur trade—twice.

Story and Photos
by J. W. Anderson

ONE January afternoon in the year 1911, word came to the factor at Moose Factory by that old reliable, the moccasin telegraph, that Musko the mighty hunter had trapped a silver fox! Preparations were made at once to go and get it. Musko's camp was some thirty miles up the Harricanaw River, which emptied into James Bay some sixty miles from the mouth of the Moose, so that it would take about a week for the return trip. But it was worth it. Two men were to be sent. The veteran guide McAuley was to drive the dog team, and with him was to go the young Scottish apprentice, John Sinclair. John had asked several times to be sent out on a dog-team trip, and now his request was to be granted at last.

But why all the excitement over a silver fox? Well, in the wilds the silver fox is a rare phenomenon—probably two, or at the most, three percent of red fox litters. It was thus, before the days of silver fox farms, a very rare and valuable pelt, and consequently much sought after by rival fur traders. It also had a very disturbing effect on the family economy of the Indian trapper. With the then prevailing market values, the average trapper carried on very well with an annual trapping income of two hundred to three hundred dollars. But if he had the good fortune to trap a silver fox instead of the usual run of reds and crosses, then his income was boosted by two hundred to seven hundred dollars, depending on the quality and colour of the pelt. The silver fox was thus a veritable bonanza, not only for the trapper who caught it, but for the trader who bought it. The game, therefore, was to find out about silver foxes before your rival trading company, keep it dark, and send off a team before your opponent knew what was "in the wind." Nevertheless, it would often happen that rival traders would send off teams "in great secrecy" and at dead of night, only to find with the dawn that they were both after the same pot of gold!

So we can imagine the excitement of the tenderfoot John Sinclair, when he was told his request was to be granted. His first winter trip! This would have been excitement enough, but to think that he was actually commissioned to secure a silver fox—why, this was almost as zestful as the adventures of R. M. Ballantyne, whose books had induced him, like many another fur trader, to join the Company. Moreover, this particular trip was to be prefaced by a traditional stratagem, reminiscent of the old H B C-North West Company days—a gala dance on the eve of departure—thus throwing the opposition completely off the scent! Invitations were accordingly sent to the officials of the rival trading company across the river, to their wives, to their junior members, to their workmen—white, Indian and half-breed—and, most important, to their dog drivers. Come one, come all!

To the tune of an orchestra consisting of two violins and one Indian drum, dancing was commenced at eight in the evening and carried on to the small hours of the morning. The chief factor was there, and, although somewhat beyond the dancing age, he nevertheless graced the proceedings with his presence until midnight. As was to be expected of the day and age, the *piece de resistance* at the dance was the good old Red River jig, and for the rest—quadrilles and square dances. There were tremendous copper kettles of hot tea and thousands of currant buns in a room off the main "Bachelor's Hall," where guests refreshed themselves, buffet style, from time to time. And we may rest assured that our apprentice, John Sinclair, being young and foolish, and taking no thought for the morrow, danced to his heart's content with matrons and maidens, young and old, and irrespective of the shade of their complexions—dusky, white or otherwise. At three in the morning the party broke up, farewells were extended, and the guests from the opposition sent rejoicing on their way to their own trading post, two miles distant across the Moose River.

But, though others retired for a few hours sleep, there was no rest for John Sinclair, for morning preparations had to be made for the trip. Wise old McAuley, the guide, had retired from the dance at midnight, and thus had the benefit of at least a few hours' rest before starting. First came breakfast, then packing up, loading the sled—an Eskimo type komatik—harnessing and hitching the dogs, and finally, about six, off they went with a fine to-do and in great style.

The weather was moderating, with a threat of snow, and by the time the team was out on the coast of James Bay, about four hours later, a steady snowfall had begun to impede their progress. No sooner on the coast, however, than it was time for lunch—a very welcome break for both man and beast, and particu-

Dogs and men exert themselves to get a loaded komatik over an ice barrier on James Bay.

larly for John Sinclair, who was commencing to think that this business of dancing all night and travelling by dog-team all day was not quite so glamorous as at first might appear.

Yet lunch on the shores of James Bay, with driftwood to make a fire, was a very short affair in point of time, and not particularly restful—even if the weather was comparatively mild. What with chopping firewood, melting snow in the copper tea-kettle, thawing buns, and all the time being careful not to wet his moccasins at the modest fire, John did not find the lunch period in the least bit restful. But the warm drink and the bite of food was refreshing, and off they went after lunch, refreshed but not rested.

The afternoon was a weary drag for John; snow was falling steadily, the load was heavy, and consequently there was very little riding for either him or McAuley. It was a welcome relief when McAuley swung the team into the land at Mistassinny Point to camp for the night. John soon discovered that, although they were off the trail for the day, the day's work was by no means finished. There was the business of camping—the making of a temporary home for the night, and all that this entailed. Wearily, and under the direction of McAuley, he set to work tramping down the tent site with his snowshoes, cutting small spruce trees to make a bed of boughs for the tent floor, erecting the tent itself, banking the tent with snow, erecting the portable stove and stovepipes and—while McAuley cut the night's supply of firewood—unloading the sled and stowing the grub-box and sleeping equipment in the tent.

With the firewood cut and piled by the tent door, McAuley told John to kindle the stove and start cooking supper while the dogs were being made snug for the night. First McAuley tramped holes in the snow at the foot of spruce trees—one for each dog of the team. In these he placed a few spruce boughs, then unhitched the dogs from the sled and chained each one to his particular tree, with his harness hanging above him, all ready for the morning. Next came the cooking for the dogs, for which McAuley made a large outdoor open fire surmounted by a spruce tripod on which was hung the huge dog-kettle. The standard diet was one pound of oatmeal and one quarter pound of tallow per dog per day, and it was the preparation of this "mush" which occupied McAuley for the next hour or so, interspersed with frequent trips to the tent to offer friendly advice to John Sinclair in his noviciate at camp cooking.

In between times of replenishing the fire and stirring the mush, McAuley would smoke contentedly at his pipe, taking his rest in preparation for the morrow. As soon as the mush was cooked, McAuley left it to cool while he had supper in the tent, commenting not unfavourably on John's cooking. But as they had a plentiful supply of prepared meat balls from the post, "cooking" consisted merely of warming up. After supper came cleaning up, and by that time John Sinclair was more than ready to roll into his Hudson's Bay blankets for the night, somewhat disillusioned about "the romance of the fur trade." He never heard McAuley feed the dogs, or turn in for the night.

A good meal and a night's rest can work wonders, so that John arose next morning at five feeling that perhaps after all, there was something romantic about the fur trade. At all events he went through the routine with interest, albeit the first day of winter travel had brought into play some unaccustomed muscles. Washing in the snow was a new experience, but McAuley in his wisdom advised him to go through with it, pointing out that, while it might not be very effective as an ablution, it *was* stimulating and refreshing.

Then followed the morning routine. Breakfast of bacon and beans (prepared by McAuley while John slept), dishwashing, packing up, dressing, striking tent, loading and lashing the sled, harnessing and hitching the dogs and, finally, hitting the trail at seven while it was still dark. McAuley explained to John that, while there was no objection to starting out in the dark, it was always the part of wisdom to camp and cut your night's firewood before nightfall. Moreover, if you kept the team on the trail from seven in the morning until three or four in the afternoon, with only twenty or thirty minutes for a hurried lunch, the dogs had done well enough and had earned their one meal per day.

On the second night, the travellers camped at the mouth of the Harricanaw River—rather a cold and cheerless camp in the willows. The deep spruce woods were too far distant through the soft snow. Following the usual routine of evening chores, the travellers rested themselves and awoke on the third morning to find that the wind was blowing half a gale from the west, clouds of snow were swirling past the tent door and drifting deep in the hollows. It was a long day's journey up the Harricanaw River to the Musko camp, so McAuley wisely decided not to tackle it on a stormy day. The inclement weather was thus turned to good account and became a day of rest, beneficial for both travellers and team.

John was quite surprised to find how content he was to rest in camp. He had often wondered what Indians did on the "off days" when they were not on the trail. Now he realized that, after a few days' travel, a period of rest was a physical necessity. McAuley, for his part, visited the Indian Koosees in his camp nearby and

John Sinclair prepares a mug-up in the shelter of the woods.

Koosees' camp at the mouth of the Harricanaw.

made preparations for the up-river journey on the morrow. It was decided to travel light, and to hire Koosees' son, Namakoos, as guide. Namakoos would not only take them to the Musko camp but, more important, would break trail for the team. The tent and stove would be cached at Koosees' camp at the mouth of the river.

The weather turned clear and cold, and the morning of the fourth day found John Sinclair and McAuley, with their Indian guide, snowshoeing up the Harricanaw in high hopes of securing the coveted silver fox that night. There had been little riding on the sled from Moose Factory. Now there would be none going up-river, and it was a case of steady snowshoeing all day, the Indian guide in the lead breaking trail, John following him and McAuley with the team bringing up the rear. On the shores of James Bay, where the wind has a great sweep, a gale or two soon packs the snow hard and solid, and a sled with runners slides along easily. Inland, however, the wind does not have the same opportunities, with resulting soft snow, which means snowshoeing for men and very heavy going for the dogs.

The slowness of the pace soon became evident, for by noon a bare ten miles had been covered, the best part of the day was gone, and the Musko camp was still some twenty miles distant. This was rather a disappointment for John, but McAuley and Namakoos were unperturbed. Where to sleep, asked John, when the tent and stove had been left behind at the mouth of the river? This was easy, according to McAuley: they would sleep in a barricade. And, of course, next day they would be sure to reach the Musko camp! And camp in a barricade they did, which was a new and not altogether comfortable experience for John Sinclair.

He was amazed by the huge quantity of six-foot drywood logs required to keep the fire going for the night. However, the barricade was comfortably lined with spruce boughs with a windbreak behind and the cosy fire in front. So long as one kept turning alternately back and front to the fire, one could keep tolerably warm, though it must be admitted John found it a little draughty at times. It was clear and cold, one of those twenty- or thirty-below nights when the stars twinkle so brightly. Soon after supper, while McAuley and the Indian were puffing contentedly at their pipes, John set about making his blankets into a sleeping robe, only to discover that, while they were sufficient in weight, they were lacking in size. They should have been "four-pointers" instead of three and a half, and while they would do for sleeping in the tent, for the open-air barricade it was another matter. The result was that John did not spend a very pleasant night, though he did learn one valuable lesson.

The fifth day was a repetition of the fourth—clear cold weather and steady snowshoeing up river at a distressingly slow pace. The evening found the travellers still looking for the Musko camp and the elusive silver fox. To make matters worse, food for both men and dogs was running low, for McAuley had counted on securing moose, venison and fish from old man Musko. John found the second night in a barricade no more comfortable than the first, though he was relieved by the thought that next day they should surely secure the silver fox and sleep comfortably in the warm wigwam of Musko the hunter, feasting on moose, rabbits and perhaps beaver!

At last, on the sixth day, they found tracks on the river bank which led them to Musko's camp site. But here a rude shock awaited them. Only the framework of the hunter's wigwam was standing, the camp fire was dead, and Musko with his family had departed inland, taking with them the coveted silver fox. Namakoos the guide had a pretty good idea of the locality to which Musko had shifted his camp, but, as our food supplies were exhausted, it was quite out of the question to follow him. The idea of giving up the silver fox was a sharp disappointment to John, though the edge of his keenness had been dulled by short rations and the hardships of the trail. By this time he was half starved and trail weary and quite willing to admit that chasing silver foxes was not so very glamorous after all.

There was nothing for it but to beat a retreat. The food situation was serious, though fortunately the Indian knew of a cache of flour, left by Musko for spring use, and from which they could draw in the emergency. So the seventh day found the travellers heading back down-stream, with nothing to eat, and depending entirely on the flour cache. Such advantage as might have been gained by doubling back on their beaten trail was lost by the weariness of the dogs due to lack of food. Being a tenderfoot apprentice, John Sinclair was suffering more than McAuley and the Indian from lack of nourishment, especially as he could not yet, like the others, take sustenance from the last scrap of bacon rind or pork skin.

On the afternoon of the eighth day, the weary travellers came upon the flour cache, but alas, there was

Icing the runners of a komatik.

flour and nothing else! Not even baking powder, salt or lard. However, McAuley set about making unleavened bannocks, using for grease the last particle of fat to be rendered from a piece of pork skin. And such bannocks! Well mixed with cinders and other forms of corruption from the open fire. However, they were hot, and to hungry men they tasted good. But John in his unwisdom, and being a tenderfoot, ate not wisely but too well, with the result that he was violently sick on the trail that afternoon, thus further weakening his already hungry frame. The dogs, however, having stronger stomachs than John, seemed somewhat perked up after their snack of bannock. Camp that night was a nightmare for the apprentice. Not only was the bannock lying heavily on his "conscience," but the reduced diet of the past few days was taking heavy toll. After all, he mused, there must be something to this theory of being trail-hardened.

Next morning two of the dogs were found dead. Naturally, the weaker ones go first, and while the men in the party were faring poorly, they at least always had a mouthful or two of nourishment, whereas the dogs had had nothing after the first night inland on the Harricanaw River until they were given the scraps of bannock on the afternoon of the eighth day.

On the ninth day the travellers arrived back at the mouth of the Harricanaw. John was weary, foot-sore, and dispirited, and he threw himself down on his bed of boughs in utter exhaustion. What had given promise of being an exciting adventure had turned out to be a dismal failure from every point of view. After days of cold and hardship and short commons, they had nothing to show for their pains but the loss of three valuable dogs.

A shout from McAuley brought him out of his dismal musings. He put his head out of the tent door and saw the old man standing in the door of Koosees' camp, holding up a prime silver fox!

The effect on John's drooping spirits was magical. What a grand game the fur trade was, to be sure! There was adventure in it—romance. Right after supper he set about "dickering" with Koosees. A deal was made and that night, all his tribulations forgotten, John slept with the silver fox for his pillow, no doubt dreaming of a Fur Trader's Valhalla!

But the travellers were not out of their difficulties yet, for they had limited food for themselves and their dogs for the return to Moose Factory, which fortunately was but one sleep distant. Koosees had not been to the trading post for some time, and therefore had little to spare in the way of "white man's food." Moreover McAuley's team had been further depleted by the death of another dog on the night of their return to the mouth of the Harricanaw. Koosees was able to spare a little dog food, though as his store was meagre the travellers took only one night's rations.

After resting up one day, McAuley and John started out for Moose Factory. With a reduced and half-starved team, and short rations to boot, the home run was far from pleasant, though by dint of steady plugging the half-way point of the two-day journey was reached on time. The next day it blew a gale from the northwest, prohibiting all thought of travel. This was serious, because the last scrap of food had been given to the dogs in the expectation of returning to the post that day. It meant that the team would be unfed that night and would have to make the post next day on empty stomachs.

By morning of the final day, the weather had moderated, and the two travellers set out in good spirits in expectation of reaching the post that night. The depleted dog-team was naturally slow, but the travellers kept at it and reached the mouth of the Moose River at dusk. Here, a second campfire was made and a hot drink partaken of though there was very little left to eat. Then the final struggle for the trading post. And what a struggle! John was very tired and, though temporarily revived by a warm cup of tea, there were fourteen weary miles to Moose Factory. The dogs, too, were slower than ever with the descent of darkness. So there was nothing for it but that McAuley should walk ahead to lead them, leaving John to handle the sled.

To this day John avers that the team must have stuck in the snowdrifts at least five thousand times that night on the way up to the post! The least little drift would stop them, weak and dispirited as they were. This meant a violent tug to start the sled again, and there were not many "violent tugs" left in apprentice John Sinclair. Poor John! That night, on the last fourteen miles to Moose Factory, he came through the "Gethsemane" experienced at some time or other by most northern travellers: that utter weariness of body when the one dominating desire is *rest;* the horrible temptation to lie down in the snow, knowing full well that he would never get up again. On such occasions mind does triumph over matter. Physical energy is exhausted but will-power keeps one snowshoed foot moving past the other for the last few agonizing miles and the goal is reached at last!

Apprentice John Sinclair and McAuley the teamster started out with twelve dogs and seven days' rations. They were absent fourteen days and returned with only seven dogs. But they did bring back a silver fox, that pot of gold for fur traders of a generation ago.

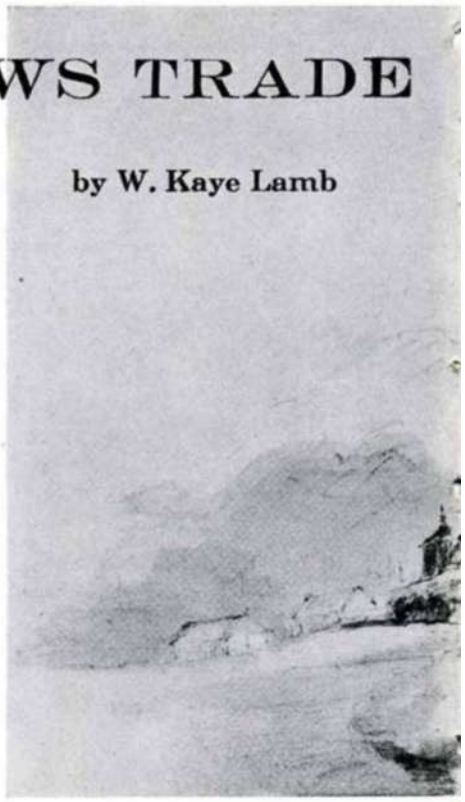
Koosees, whose lucky catch saved the day.

The Trackless Snows D. B. Marsh

THE FLAG FOLLOWS TRADE

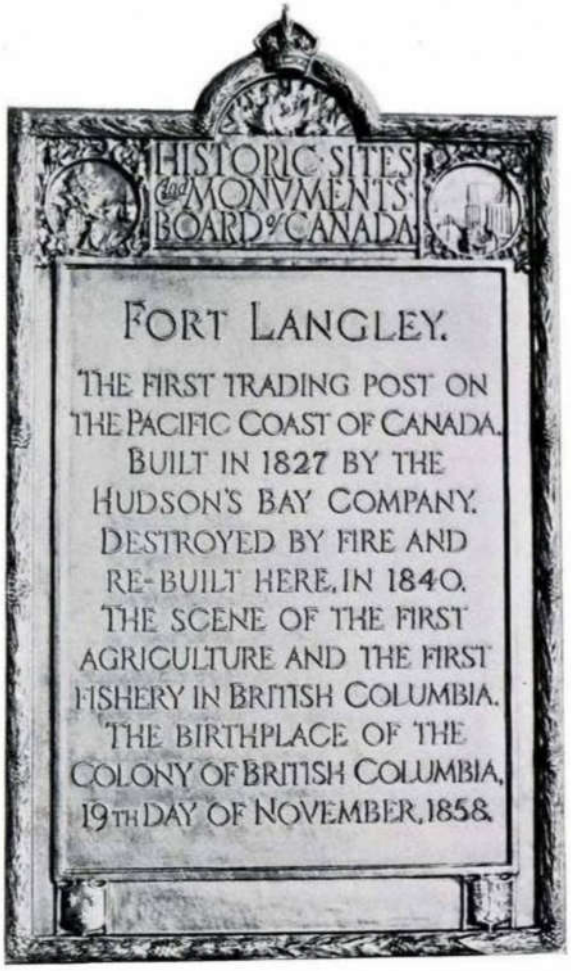
Had it not been for the occupation of the Pacific Coast by the Hudson's Bay Company, Canada to-day would probably have no western seaboard.

by W. Kaye Lamb



Fort Langley on the Fraser River as it appeared when the colony of British Columbia was created there. From the sketch by E. Mallandaine in the B.C. Archives, done in January 1859.

JUNE of this year will mark the centenary of the Treaty of Washington, popularly known as the Oregon Treaty of 1846. No doubt most Canadians will dismiss the occasion as being "just another anniversary," but it is a pity that they should, for Canada's present and probable future stem in great part from that treaty. Its terms defined the boundary between British and American territory west of the Rocky Mountains. Nothing less than Canada's access to the Pacific Ocean was thus at stake, and it was the settlement then arrived at that made possible the Dominion of to-day, stretching from sea to sea. Until 1846, one should remember, British sovereignty did not extend to any part of the Pacific Coast of North America, and for a time it was none too certain that Britain would make good her title to what is now the coastal region of British Columbia.


HISTORIC SITES and MONUMENTS BOARD of CANADA
FORT LANGLEY.
THE FIRST TRADING POST ON THE PACIFIC COAST OF CANADA. BUILT IN 1827 BY THE HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY. DESTROYED BY FIRE AND RE-BUILT HERE, IN 1840. THE SCENE OF THE FIRST AGRICULTURE AND THE FIRST FISHERY IN BRITISH COLUMBIA. THE BIRTHPLACE OF THE COLONY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA, 19TH DAY OF NOVEMBER, 1858.

The tablet at Fort Langley. One small building still remains.

The territory apportioned between the nations extended from California on the south to Alaska on the north. It is usually referred to nowadays as "Old Oregon." History has been ransacked many times for evidence to support the rival British and American claims to this region; in particular, the voyages and explorations of Drake, the Spaniards, Cook, Gray, Vancouver, and a dozen others, have been argued about *ad infinitum*. Yet it is clear that all this is really beside the point. When the settlement was arrived at the determining factors were political expediency and the state of affairs actually existing at the time in the disputed area. This had the interesting result of making the British claims rest almost entirely upon the activities of the Hudson's Bay Company. A backward glance will show how this came about.

The Company first entered Old Oregon in 1821, when it took over the trading districts that had been organized west of the Rockies by the North West Company. One of these, New Caledonia, included most of what is to-day the central interior of British Columbia. The other, the Columbia Department, extended over the whole vast watershed of the Columbia River, which includes most of the states of Washington and Oregon. New Caledonia was regarded from the first as a valuable acquisition, for it was both rich in furs and free from rival traders; but the Columbia Department was another matter. It had not paid its way in recent years, and American competitors were approaching it from two directions. Now that the sea-otter was virtually exterminated, the coastwise trading

vessels—almost all of them American—which had made such handsome profits in that trade, were beginning to turn their attention to land furs. And to the south and east parties of American traders that had come overland were pushing nearer and nearer to the valley of the Columbia River.

As was its wont, the Company took its time in making up its mind about future policy, but in 1824-25 the decision was made to retain and develop the Columbia Department. The reason was twofold. Governor Simpson, who had visited it personally, was convinced that it could be made to pay; and, quite as important, he considered that if offered an advantageous battleground upon which to meet and check the advance of the Americans, who would otherwise penetrate to the rich preserves of New Caledonia and the lands beyond.

It was at this point that politics and the fur trade began to mingle. The years from 1818 to 1846, during which, by mutual agreement, Old Oregon was left open to the citizens of both Great Britain and the United States, are usually referred to as the period of joint occupation. The term is a misnomer, for the treaty of 1818 actually provided for *equal freedom to occupy*, which is a vastly different thing. Since the Nootka Sound controversy of 1790, possession had been recognized as being nine-tenths of the law in the important matter of establishing territorial claims, and if Great Britain could occupy a goodly portion of Old Oregon and keep the Americans out, in all probability the question of title would take care of itself in due time.

The fashion in which this political strategy could be made to coincide with the Hudson's Bay Company's purposes in the Columbia Department is obvious. The British Government wished to have the Americans kept out of the region in order to establish British sovereignty there; the Company wished to keep them out in order to enjoy a monopoly of the fur trade. It would require a thesis-length study to explore all the details of the case, but the important point may be summed up in a phrase or two: relations between the Colonial Office, the Foreign Office, and the Hudson's Bay Company were not always cordial, but they were almost invariably close. Mutual interests were of compelling strength, and the Company became for all intents and purposes the champion of British interests, as well as British trade, west of the Rocky Mountains.

By 1824 the British Government had decided to range its diplomatic discussions and its occupation forces along the line of the Columbia River. In July of that year the Governor and Committee wrote from London informing Chief Factor Cameron, in the Columbia Department, that "we cannot expect to have a more Southern boundary than the Columbia in any Treaty with the Americans (altho' we are entitled to it from occupancy)," and pointing out that it would therefore be "very desirable that the hunters should get as much out of the Snake Country [i.e., the region south of the Columbia] as possible for the next few years." *In 1825 both Company and Government thought it worth while to seek a settlement of the boundary question, and a line following the Columbia, Snake, Salmon and Lemhi rivers was duly proposed to the Americans. This was refused, but for nearly twenty years British traders and diplomats both worked and hoped for a boundary line that would carry British territory as far south as the Columbia River.

The long campaign did not fail through lack of enterprise on the part of the Company. Governor Simpson, having surveyed conditions on the spot, mapped out the strategy which he thought would

*All quotations are from documents in the H B C archives.

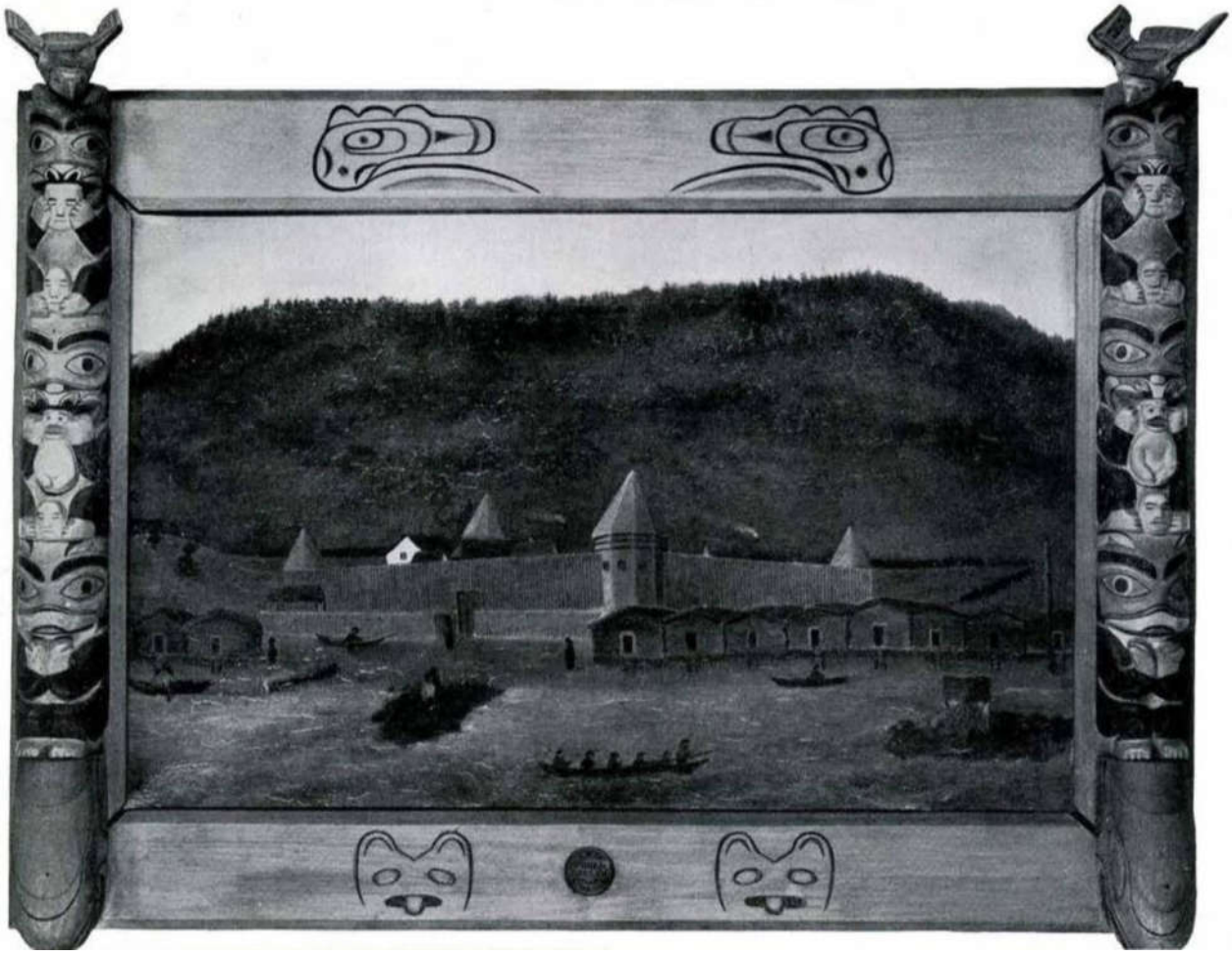
Old Oregon, from one of the maps which accompanied the Parliamentary Report on the Hudson's Bay Company in 1857. The chain of forts the Company built along the coast from the Columbia to Russian-America before 1846 consisted of Forts Vancouver, Nisqually, Victoria, Langley, McLoughlin (abandoned 1843), and Simpson. Note also the number of forts inland, in New Caledonia. The colony of British Columbia had not yet been created but the territory is shown as Columbia.

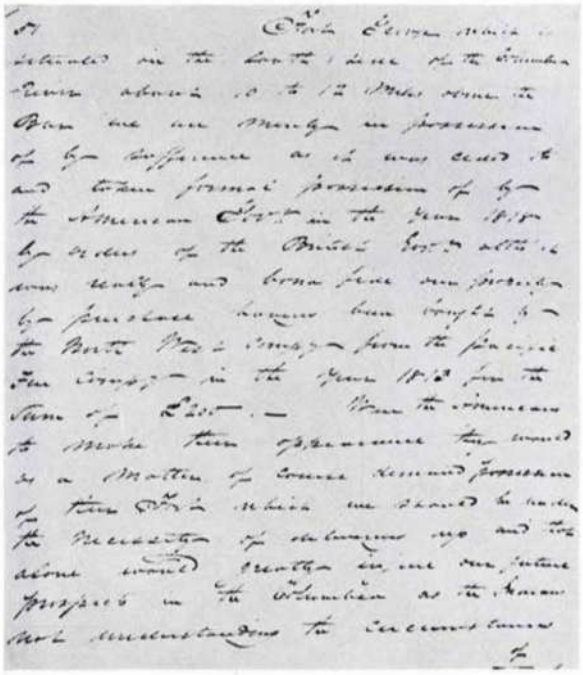
check the advance of the American traders, and under Chief Factor John McLoughlin, who was placed in charge of the Columbia Department and New Caledonia, this plan of action was carried into effect. The first moves were made by land, and took the form of the astonishing series of trading and trapping excursions through the territory to the south that have come to be known as the Snake River expeditions. These were intended quite frankly to trap out the area that was certain to become American territory eventually, both with the object of securing the furs while they were available, and of establishing a wide fire-guard, as it were, across which rival traders would find it unprofitable to venture. A sentence in a letter from Simpson to McLoughlin written in July 1827 reveals how intertwined were the motives that lay behind the plan: "The greatest and best protection we can have from opposition is keeping the country closely hunted as the first step that the American Government will take towards Colonization is through their Indian Traders and if the country becomes exhausted in Fur bearing animals they can have no inducement to proceed thither."

By the early eighteen-thirties the Snake River expeditions had largely achieved their purpose, and it was possible for McLoughlin to turn his attention to the coastal trade. By degrees a chain of trading posts was built, stretching from Puget Sound almost to Alaska, and their year-round activities cut heavily into the profits of the itinerant American trading vessels. To press this attack home, the Company took to the sea itself, first in the *Lama* and other sailing vessels, and later in the historic steamer *Beaver*. Finally, in 1839, an agreement with the Russian-American Company deprived the Americans of the trade in produce and supplies at Sitka that had made the difference between profit and loss on many of their voyages. Within a few years they practically vanished from the coast, and the Hudson's Bay traders ruled its waters as they already ruled the land.

So far as the fur trade was concerned, the Company's strategy had been completely successful. Not a single American trader had established himself north of the Columbia River. Economically, Great Britain's occupation of her chosen share of Old Oregon was complete. But before the coastal region had been won, the British Government and the Hudson's Bay Company had perceived a new and alarming development—the arrival of little bands of American immigrants, who took to farming in the Willamette Valley. The numbers involved were small at first. In October of 1838 there do not seem to have been more than twenty-six Americans settled in the Willamette. But this was a form of infiltration that the Company could not counter, and in the Eastern United States a little band of tireless enthusiasts were arousing a great interest in Oregon, and a demand that the whole of it should become American territory. The trickle of immigrants soon quickened to a steady stream. The best available estimates place the number of arrivals in 1842 at 140, in 1843 at 875, in 1844 at 1400, and in 1845 at nearly 3000. By the end of 1845 the white population of Old Oregon was almost 600, the overwhelming majority of whom were Americans.

Fort Simpson, built by the Company just south of the Alaska panhandle in 1834, from a painting by G. Lockerby after W. Compton, in the H B C Museum. The coin "H B C One Dollar in Trade" was found on the site of Fort Nass, Fort Simpson's predecessor.





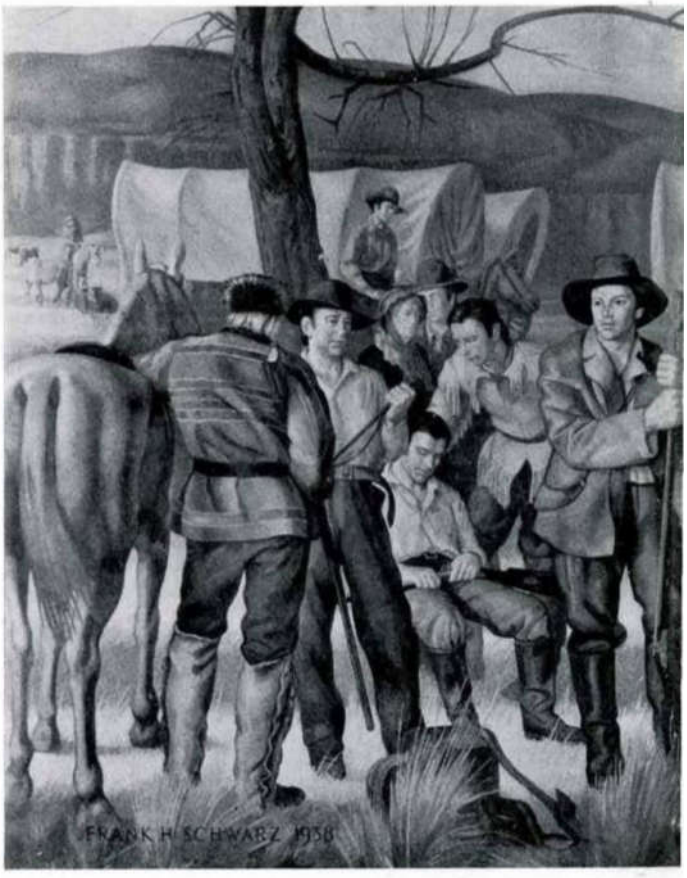
Fort George which is situated on the south side of the Columbia River about 10 to 12 miles above the Bar we are merely in possession of by sufferance as it was ceded to and taken formal possession of by the American Govt. in the year 1818 by orders of the British Govt. altho' it was really and bona fide our property by purchase having been bought by the North West Compy. from the Pacific Fur Compy. in the year 1813 for the sum of £200.— Were the Americans to make their appearance they would as a matter of course demand possession of their Fort which we should be under the necessity of delivering up and that alone would greatly injure our future prospects in the Columbia as the Indians not understanding the circumstances of . . .

Extract from Simpson's report to the Governor and Committee, dated March 10, 1825. A copy appears in italics on the right.

True, all but a handful of these thousands were settled south of the Columbia River; but to those on the spot it was clear that this was simply because the country there was more attractive to settlers. As the American colony grew, it was obvious that it could and would spread northward; British interests had no alternative but to retreat to a new line. The fact that the bars at the mouth of the Columbia made it hazardous for vessels to enter or leave the river suggested where that line should be. Simpson again appeared upon the scene in 1841, and in March 1842 made this remarkably accurate forecast of what would happen in the long run: ". . . I am of opinion the Government of the United States will insist on having a port on the North West Coast, and that Great Britain will, for the sake of peace, accept the Strait of de Fuca as a boundary on the Coast, & thereby give up Puget Sound & Hood's Canal. . . ." With this in mind he arranged for the founding of Fort Victoria, at the southern tip of Vancouver Island, both in the expectation that the presence of a post there would strengthen the British claim to the island and to provide a well-situated depot which might replace the Company's old headquarters at Fort Vancouver (now Vancouver, Washington), on the Columbia River.

During the years when the Company had fought and won its trading battles to the south and on the coast, and settlement had commenced, negotiations over the boundary had been at a standstill. It was not until 1842 that they were resumed. Started by the Americans in a conciliatory spirit, though not in a yielding mood, they quickly became infused with a fiery belligerence in 1844, when Polk made the famous slogan "Fifty-four forty or fight" his election cry in his successful campaign for the presidency. As 54° 40′ was the southern limit of Alaska, Polk was demanding the whole of Old Oregon, and he continued to voice that demand, though in less specific terms, after his election. Fortunately the annexation of Texas, and the war with Mexico that followed, made it highly expedient for the United States to avoid any serious trouble over Oregon. Ways and means were found to work out a compromise solution there, and in 1846 both parties accepted the 49th parallel as a boundary, with the proviso that all of Vancouver Island was to become British territory.

The last years before the settlement were an unhappy time for the Hudson's Bay officials in the disputed region. John McLoughlin, Peter Skene Ogden, James Douglas and John Work had all been in the country for years, and it was heartbreaking for them to see the control that they had established gradually



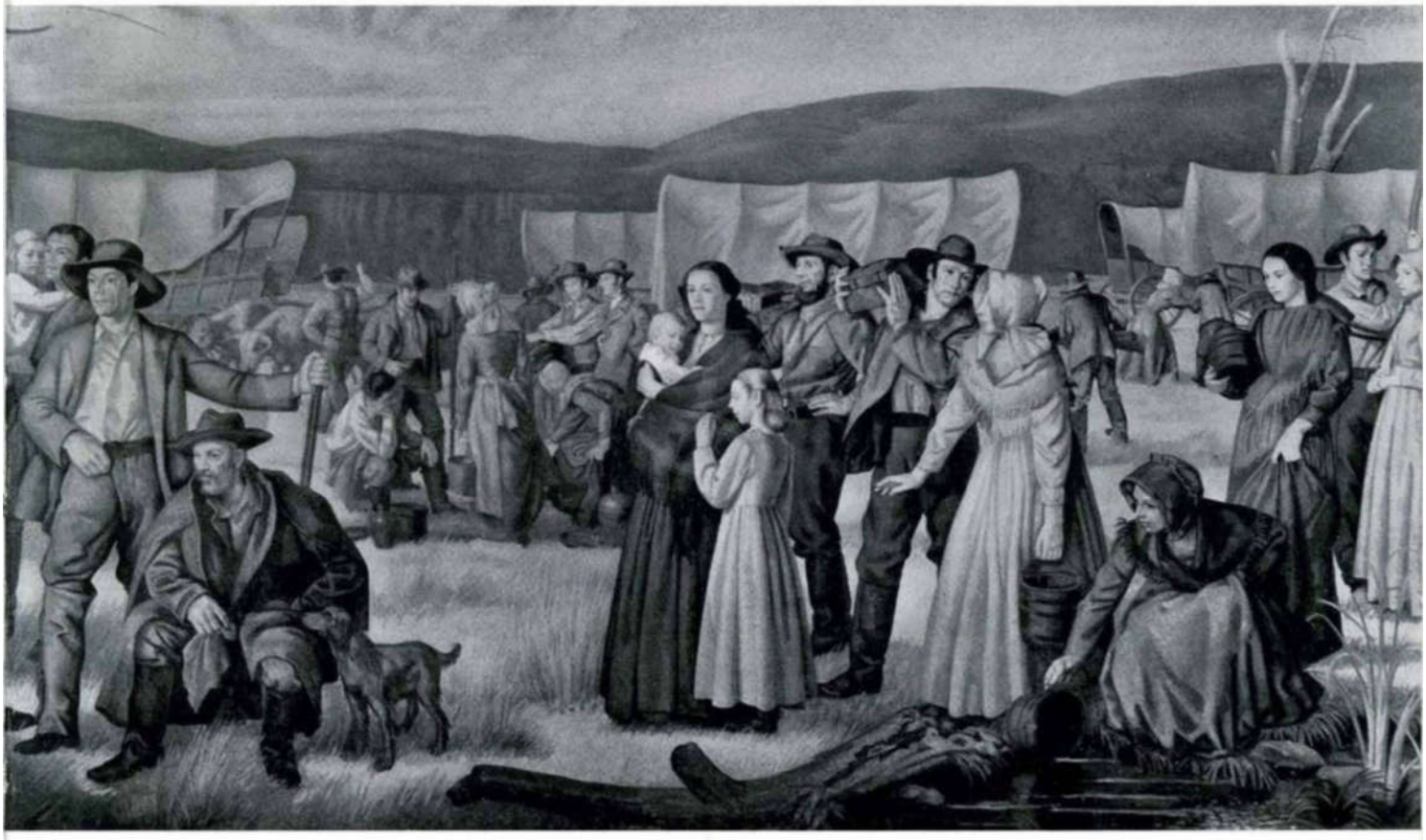
collapsing so completely. No one had made any strenuous effort to have the boundary settled while they were in sole and complete possession of the country, and they had to stand by and see American immigration snatch away the argument that occupation gave the right to possession.

Once settlement commenced, delay in the negotiations was all to the good from the American point of view. Commenting in a letter to Simpson on a speech delivered in Congress by John C. Calhoun, Douglas wrote in October 1843: "He advised Congress to urge no decided course of action on Government, and to leave the question of jurisdiction to a future time, when an American population would settle it, in favour of their own country. Let us encourage emigration, said he, and let the West send off its swarms; fill Oregon with our citizens, and it will become ours as certainly as a ripe peach drops to the ground in autumn. The wily old lawyer is correct . . . and there can be no doubt of the final success of the plan, if the country remains open a few years longer." Early in 1845 Douglas made a parallel comment: "I am sorry to hear that the Settlement of the Boundary question is likely to drag on, from year to year, without being settled, as the Americans will soon leave nothing to settle."

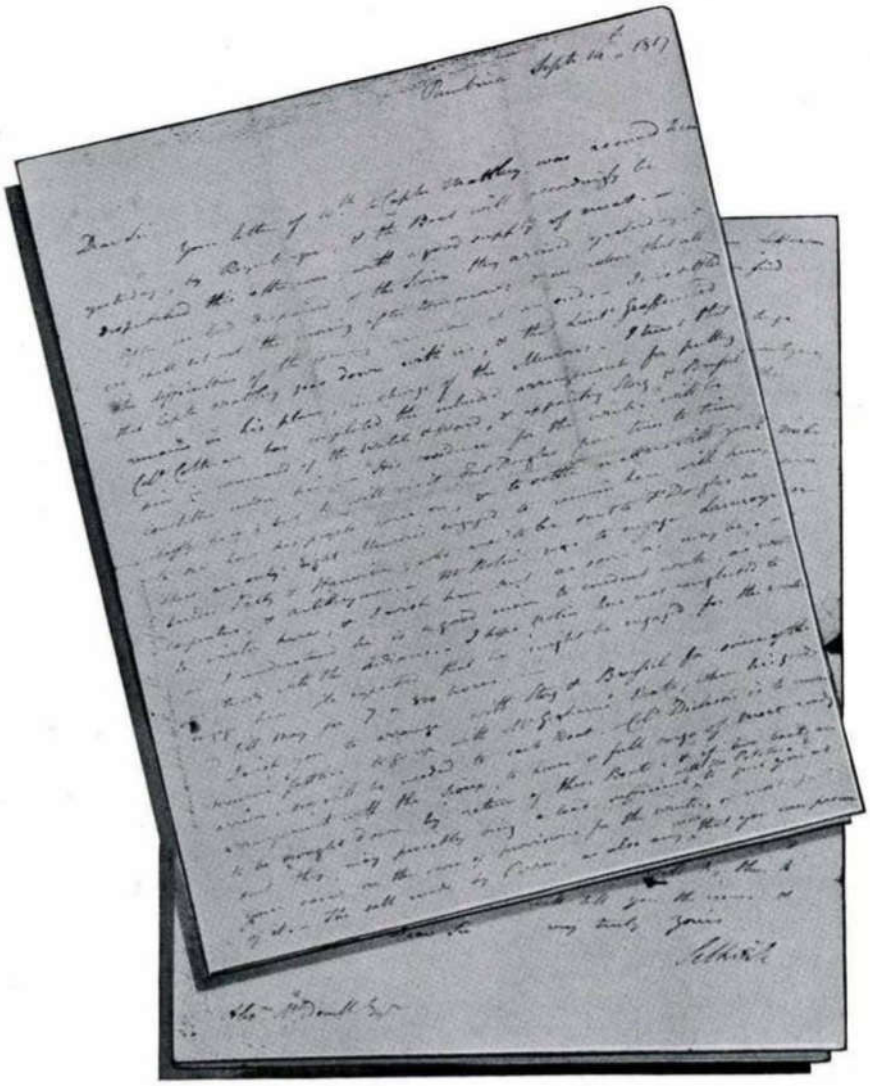
In a private letter, Work referred sadly to "These infernal persevering Yankees." Douglas, strongly British in sentiment, and soon to remove to Victoria and become more British still, remarked to Simpson: "The Yankees are a strange people, admirable in some ways and in others detestable." Peter Skene Ogden preserved both his British sympathies and his equanimity; though convinced that "manifest destiny" would win out in the end, and that the Americans would eventually overrun all Northwest America, he worked on undisturbed at his task of guarding the interests and property of the Company. After the boundary was determined, he continued to live in what had become American territory, and accomplished the difficult feat of enjoying great popularity amongst the Americans while he retained an executive position in a foreign monopoly.

But Work, Douglas and Ogden alike could draw some comfort from the fact that their efforts had not been entirely in vain. Britain had lost a large slice of Old Oregon, but the part she had gained unquestionably became hers because the Hudson's Bay Company had occupied it so completely and exclusively that the American claims to it could not be substantiated. The doctrine of contiguity could be called in to support both the choice of the 49th parallel as the boundary (since it was already established as such as far west as the summit of the Rockies) and the American claim to some land north of the Columbia (as being immediately adjacent to that south of the river, which was already fairly thickly settled by Americans). But such arguments could not be carried further, and could not push into what is now British Columbia, where the Company's control not only had long been, but remained, absolute.

It was the influx of American settlers from the east that really decided the ownership of old Oregon, south of the 49th parallel. This is one of the murals in the State Capitol at Salem, Oregon.



A Letter From Selkirk



Selkirk's letter to Alexander McDonell, Red River Settlement, written at Pembina, September 14, 1817, in his own hand. The original was presented to the Company by the late Dr. Robie L. Reid.

IN 1816, the great philanthropist, the Earl of Selkirk, set out from Montreal and travelled by way of the Great Lakes to Fort William, which he seized, and where he spent the winter. Accompanying him was a party of ex-soldiers from the Regiment de Meuron, whom he had enlisted with the double object of populating the Red River settlement and defending it.

Next spring, he continued on to the settlement, where he saw to it that the De Meurons were given tracts of land along the Red and Seine Rivers, and where he made a treaty with the Indians. By this treaty, he agreed to pay the Crees and Saulteaux one hundred pounds of tobacco annually for the right to colonize the country along the Red and Assiniboine Rivers.

In the following letter, written on his way back to Canada through the States, Selkirk deals with some of the innumerable details consequent on the founding of a colony under such difficult circumstances. The interest he took in the smallest matters is shown in his painstaking attention to the welfare of his settlers.

Pambina Septr. 14th, 1817.

Dear Sir

Your letter of 10th to Captn. Matthey was received here yesterday, by Reynberger, [?] & the Boat will accordingly be dispatched this afternoon, with a good supply of meat.—

After we had despaired of the Sioux, they arrived yesterday, & we shall set out the morning after tomorrow: & we reckon that all the difficulties of the journey are now at an end. It is settled that Captn. Matthey goes down with us, & that Lieut. [Fred] Graffenreid remains in his place, in charge of the Meurons. I trust that Coll. [W. B.] Coltman [commissioner in the dispute between the H B C and N.W.Co.] has completed the intended arrangement for putting him in command of the Watch & Ward, & appointing Storg & Brussel constables under him.—His residence for the winter will be chiefly here; but he will visit Fort Douglas from time to time to see how his people come on, & to settle matters with you. There are only eight Meurons engaged to remain here with him, besides Petty & Hanville [?]; who are to be sent to Ft. Douglas as carpenters, & artillery men. Mr. Nolin was to engage Lannoye to winter here, and I wish him sent as soon as may be, as I understand he is a good man to conduct work, as well as trusty with the Indians. I hope Nolin has not neglected to engage him. He expected that he might be engaged for this winter, viz till May for 7 or 800 livres.

I wish you to arrange with Storg & Brussel for some of the Meuron settlers to go up with Mr. Graham's Boats, when his goods arrive: six will be needed to each Boat. Coll. Dickson is to make arrangements with the Sioux to have a full cargo of meat ready to be brought down by return of these Boats, & if two boats are sent they may probably bring a load, sufficient with the potatoes, to put you at your ease on the score of provisions for the winter, or most part of it.—The salt made by Perrin, as also any more that you can procure, should be sent here by the first opportunity.

In consequence of Mr. Nolin's going down, the arrangement of the Company's trading posts must be alterd, as Mr. [John] Stitt's outfit must have been calculated for Red Lake & not for the Forks. As there is no opportunity of consulting Mr. [James] Bird I wish that Mr. Graham's opinion should be followed in any of the new arrangements to be made, & that he should divide the goods in a suitable proportion between Mr. Stitt for the Forks, & Mr. McDougal for the Lake of the Woods. I hope the Canoe that Mr. McDougal brought from Jack River may be repaired so as to serve for going to the Lake of the Woods, but it will probably require some materials to be procured from the Indians, which must be looked to in time.—

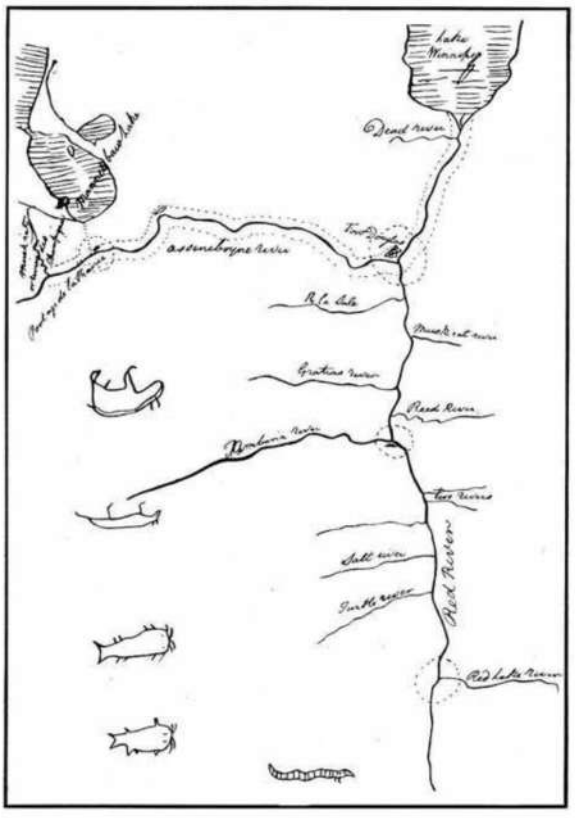
In order that Mr. Stitt may not have occasion to come into the Fort, it will be desirable that he should occupy Souce's house, in pursuance of Nolin's agreement. I presume he may sell it again for the same price next summer.

You will not forget the payment to be made to the Indians for the land according to the Deed. The Roll of Tobacco must be accompanied by a treat of liquor proportioned to the number present. That will be the time for distributing the medals & Chiefs' Coats, viz to 1. Peguis, 2. the Blackman, 3. the Black Robe, & 4. the Premier.—The latter has been speaking rather ambiguously of late, but unless he acts in a manner more decidedly hostile, Coll. Dickson thinks that he ought not to be excepted, & that he should still be treated in public with the same distinction as formerly, as the first or leading chief of the Sautoux. You know that their Medals were received from the Indian Department, so that the Interpreter should explain that they come from the King himself.—

Mr. Graham will need another Medal & Chiefs Coat for the Sioux, which will exhaust the number that we have, & there will not remain any for the Crees; but the person in charge at Qu'Appelle may arrange what ought to be done for them & the Ossiniboynes next year; and till that is fully considerd, it is perhaps better that we should not send one medal, which could hardly be given without creating jealousy.—The person in charge there ought also to receive a Duplicate of the Indian Deed for the land, so that he may get the transaction completed on the part of the Crees, & signed by as many of their Chiefs as possible. As there is at present only one Cree's signature, the Tobacco for them ought to be kept in reserve, till a greater proportion of the nation have ratified the bargain.—In the Deed to be signed by the Crees, the Portage des Prairies should be added as one of the places where the land is given to the distance of 10 miles, in the same manner as this place & Fort Douglas.

I believe I mentioned to you that lands might be laid out for settlement as far up as opposite to River Sale in this direction, but the land for two miles on each side of River Sale itself must be reserved as being

The map accompanying Selkirk's treaty with the Cree and Saulteaux. The totems show the relative location of the tribal hunting grounds. Top to bottom: The Premier, Peguis, The Blackman, The Black Robe, The Ringer (Le Sonnant).



already disposed of.—I also wish to reserve the point immediately opposite to the upper end of Mr. Laidlaw's farm marked A in the enclosed sketch. Down the River a reserve should be kept for a village near the foot of the Rapids. But anywhere else down the River or up the Ossiniboyne River (except the wooded point opposite the Forks) may be granted.—The general rate of sale should be considered as 10 shillings per acre; but for the present I am not so anxious about the actual value of the price to be received as to accustom the people to consider the land as worth a price.—I am desirous that all the industrious & deserving people in the country should be settled on land & should feel an interest in it by having a secure title. Therefore to induce them to settle I wish you to arrange with them in the manner most likely to meet their own ideas.—Deductions may be given at your discretion for prompt payment or on other grounds when the individual is likely to be a valuable settler or instead of a money price you may stipulate for some equivalent in work or produce that may be more easy to the Settler, & at the same time useful to us.—Also if the Canadians prefer paying an annual Quit Rent or Feeduty in grain rather than a price in hand, you may arrange a fair commutation.—

I believe I mentioned to you that Mr. Thomas might choose his farm in any situation that he may prefer, that is not already engaged: but I would prefer his settling as near to the village as he can find a desirable situation. Perhaps the situation first thought of by Mr. Laidlaw might meet his wishes. He may take an entire Point on the River, if it does not occupy more than one mile in front measured in a straight line parallel to the general course of the River. I wish you to put into Mr. Thomas's hands the assortment of medicines & instruments that remain at the Settlement which he may perhaps accept as a compensation for his medical advice & assistance to the persons in the immediate service of the Settlement.

The Sioux who have met us here, have suffered by mortality among their horses as well as the Sautoux, & they have very few with them—none to sell—but Mr. Feuire [?] Coll. Dickson's Interpreter who has come here with them, has sent to the Missouri from whence he expects a good supply towards the end of the season.—Of all sorts of livestock that we may procure one third should be reserved for Mr. Laidlaw's farm, one third distributed among the Meuron settlers and one third among the older settlers, charging the price in every case at the current value in the neighbourhood.—The Meurons have a right to a long credit for these supplies as well as the tools they get. The particulars to which they are entitled will be transmitted from Canada.—As to other supplies from the Store, the Meurons of last year have in general money due to them on their past wages. The newcomers will need some supplies on credit; but as they seem to be industrious men I think they may be trusted to a reasonable extent. You must use your own discretion as to the amount that may be allowed to any individual, proportioning it to his conduct; but it must be remembered that we have not been able to supply all the tools &c. that by their bargain they are entitled to; & therefore it is no more than fair that they should receive a little indulgence in other respects.—

I trust that the Blacksmith has made some progress in the axes. Besides those required for the new settlers, several are wanted here and Mr. Graham also will need as many as can be spared. He also wants a Whip Saw & a Cross Cut both of which I believe can be furnished to him. Cooper's Tools & a small set of the most commonly used Carpenters' tools, should also be sent here as soon as possible,—with the remainder of the articles wrote for by Captn. Matthey.

As Mr. Heurter [?] has expressed his inclination to return & settle at Red River I have given him the village lot now occupied by Bethmann [?] of which I have put a more particular description into the hands of Mr. de Graffenried. He is also to have a thousand acres in the same manner as Mr. Thomas at any place away from the village.

Rivard has been applying for a lot on the south side of Point Sherbrooke & I would wish him to be placed about half way between Luttmans and Bethmann's. You will arrange the consideration as you find advisable.

In arranging Lagimonière's account I find there is a larger balance due to him, as well as to Beautino & Tranchemontagne. I have given them notes, for the amount, & taken up the vouchers. I enclose Tranchemontagne's.

The Flour & Pork which Mr. Bird was to send for the military detachment, should remain in store, where it may serve as a resource in case of urgency: but except in such a case it would be well not to touch upon it, as it will probably be wanted for the military next summer, and possibly even this winter:—it is not beyond possibility, that an order from the Governor General may meet the detachment at or near Lake La Pluie, & turn them back.—

Coll. Dickson means to arrange a plan for transmitting letters in winter, thro' the United States. He is uncertain at what periods his runners may be sent off, but it would be advisable for you to write to me every month or six weeks, and send the letter here to be forwarded by the first opportunity to Mr. Graham's.

I daresay I must have forgot several things that I ought to write about; but hope to have another opportunity by return of our horses from Coll. Dickson's & will try then to supply omissions.—Mr. Graham will tell you the news & I remain

Dear Sir very truly yours
Selkirk

Alex. McDonnell, Esqr

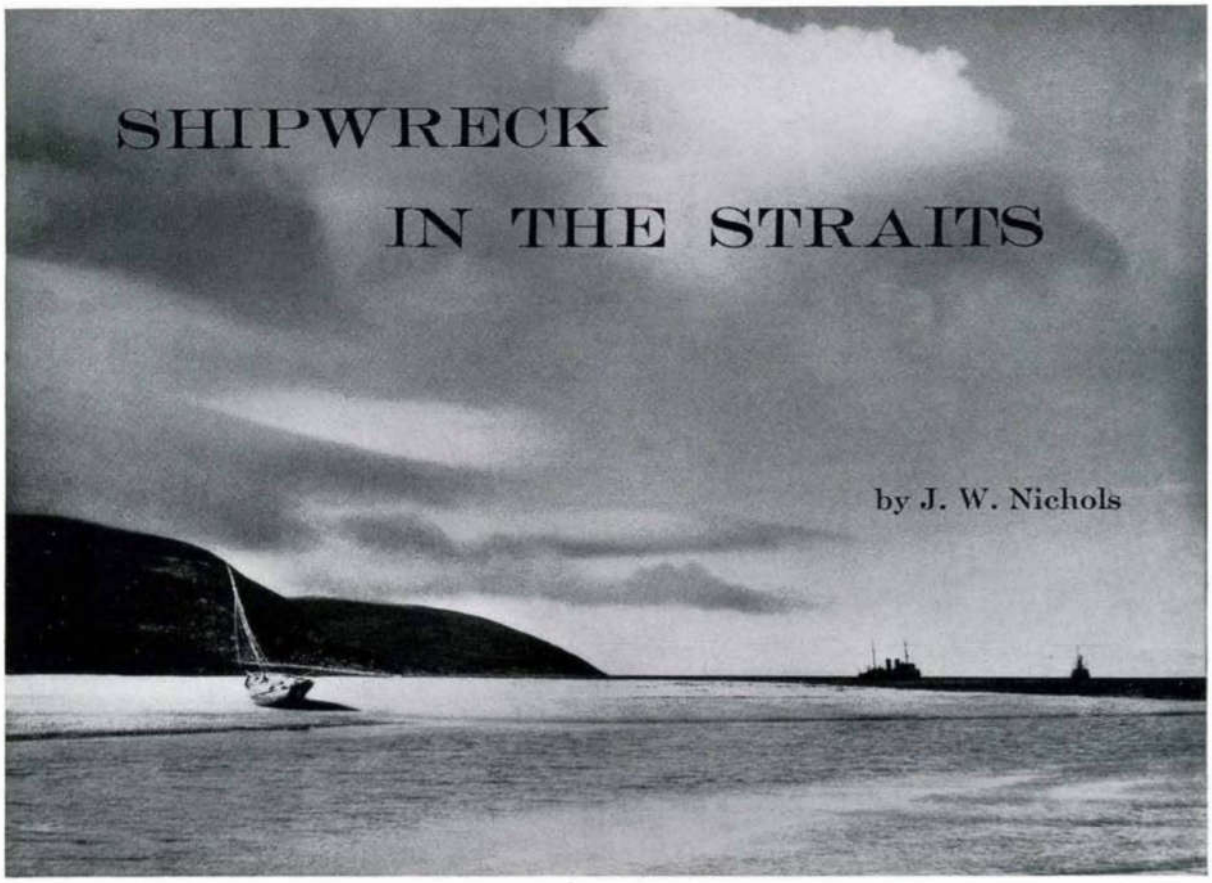
P.S.—I beg you to write by the first opportunity to Gov. Bird, & explain the arrangements that we have made, in consequence of the occurrences which were unexpected at the time he left us—apologizing for the want of time which prevents me from writing.—

Ossiniboyne has just informed me of the place where the Halfbreeds have concealed the Brass 3# gun which they were bringing down from Qu'Appelle this Spring. —They were encamped about two leagues down the River from the old Trading houses of Portage la Prairie, & the gun was buried in the open plain about half a league still lower down the river, & at the [distance] of 6 or 8 arpens from the River bank.

[The] persons present were LaCerte, La Fontaine, & [torn] none of whom are very likely to be found to show it.—Ossiniboyne himself saw it only by accident.

I promised Souce a little winter wheat to sow—it is in a Keg 9 or 10 from Pt. Meuron—it is time it should be sown: and ours also.—

The wine, Flour, and Sugar sent here are all taken for our journey: so that I will be glad that a further supply could be sent for Mr. Graffenried's winter stock.



SHIPWRECK IN THE STRAITS

by J. W. Nichols

The beach at Wolstenholme, from where the author set out on his adventures. The steamers are the "N. B. McLean," government icebreaker, and the "Nascopie." Max Sauer

IN the fall of 1915, my second year in the Arctic, it became necessary for me to move from Cape Wolstenholme to Wakeham Bay with as little delay as possible. Under favourable conditions this could be done in not more than three days, so after a day of preparation for the trip we started out at 4 a.m. on October 12. The boat we were using was of the Peterhead type, full decked and equipped with a full set of sails and an engine of six and one-half horsepower, her speed being approximately five miles an hour. The morning we started it was calm and the air was very crisp; new ice had formed on the water for the first time that fall, and we were anticipating a pleasant and speedy voyage.

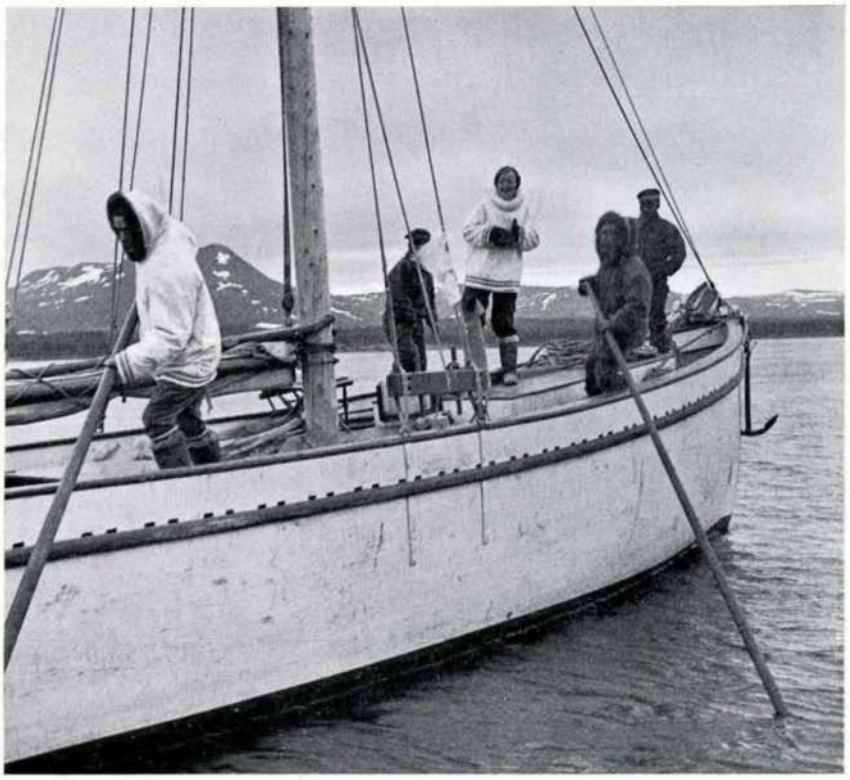
On the first day out we sailed and steamed alternately for fifteen hours, and at about half past seven in the evening we dropped our anchors in Deception Bay. This was a good run, and we figured that half the voyage was over. Just before making harbour it began to breeze up from the northeast with light snow falling, so before getting supper we gave our anchors plenty of chain and made things snug and safe for the night.

We had finished our supper and were enjoying a smoke when we noticed that our boat was rolling and heaving about much more than usual, so we went on deck to have a look at things. We were met by a real blizzard. The wind had risen to a gale, and we were unable to see the shore through the driving snow; the seas were increasing rapidly, and we knew we should have to move to a safer anchorage. As the decks were *very* slippery with sleet and snow, it was *very* hard to keep our feet and stop ourselves from falling overboard. We had just managed to haul up one anchor and make it secure, when a larger sea than usual struck us, and we were driven back with such force that the remaining anchor chain snapped, and we began driving on the rocks. Fortunately the engine started without trouble, and we managed to pull out into deep water.

The night was as black as the inside of a chimney, and a strong northeast gale was blowing, with snow and sleet. We decided that it was too dangerous to try and make another harbour, so we headed for the open sea and forced our way along all night, tossed and pitched about like pop corn in a popper. It was impossible to keep our feet. The tiller man had to be lashed on deck, and the lookout also had to be tied to the mast. I was engineer and had to sit on the engine-room floor holding fast with one hand and nursing the engine with the other. Oil was splashing from the tank with every roll of the boat, and we expected it to ignite any minute. Bilge water was washing up through the engine-room floor, and generally our condition was anything but comfortable.

Towards daylight on the 14th we were drawing near Charles Island, and were looking forward to a cup of hot tea and a rest. But we were disappointed. Heading into a tide rip which could not be avoided, and which was much rougher than other parts of the sea, our boat did everything but turn over, and for the first time began shipping seas.

The author. A snapshot taken during his seafaring days.



A Peterhead boat. C. N. Stephen

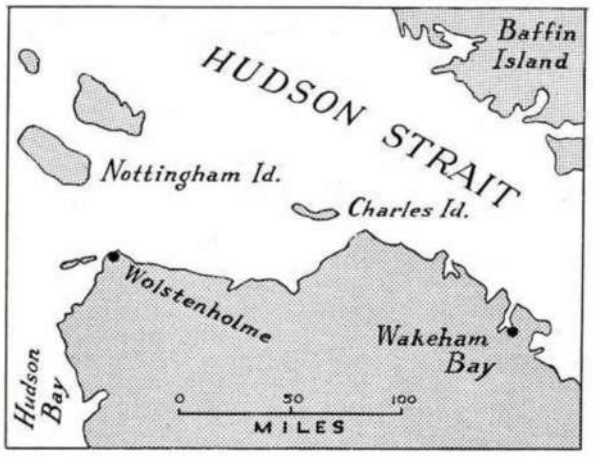
It was while we were fighting our way through this rough water that our engine-room caught fire. The oil from the tank splashed once too often, and at last struck the hot exhaust pipe. In very short order our engine-room was a mass of flame, and we thought it was the end of things. We started throwing water at the flames as fast as the very unsteady condition of the boat would permit, but could make no headway. While we were doing this, our boat swung around stern-on to the waves, and we were fortunate (or unfortunate) enough to take several seas on board. This completely put out the fire. We were now, however, almost as badly off as ever. Our boat was more than half full of water, and every roll put the decks awash and made things much worse. We were forced to make the most of a bad job, so we hoisted the mainsail, reefed to about three feet of canvas, and brought her around head to the seas again. We then started bailing out the water—a job which was completed after several hours of very hard and trying work.

During all this time we were tossed and buffeted from one sea to another, and we were thoroughly soaked with sea water. We were hungry and very tired and did not much care what happened. We had little thought of our engine starting up again and we were heartened when, after cleaning out the water, she began kicking away without trouble. We then made for the nearest harbour, and after twenty-five hours continually fighting either wind and heavy seas or fire, we at last slowly made our way into some kind of shelter and thought our troubles were over.

This however was not to be. The seas were still heavy in this little cove, so we put out two anchors and gave each sixty fathoms of chain. We then managed, under difficulties, to make a cup of tea and have something to eat. While we were doing this, the wind appeared to change a bit, and the seas began coming in rougher and rougher. We were compelled to start the engine again to take some of the strain off the anchors, and for two days and three nights we had to take it.

On the night of the sixteenth the storm evidently reached a climax. A heavier sea than usual struck us with such force that the lashings on a barrel of oil were torn away, leaving the barrel to roll around the engine room and generally cause havoc. The next sea took the barrel completely through the side of the engine-room and made such a hole that it was impossible to keep the seas from filling the boat.

The trip described here was made from Wolstenholme to Wakeham Bay via Charles Island.



This was as much as we could take, so we decided to beach her. It was impossible to walk along the deck to get at the anchors, so we put a rope around Sargeuk, one of our Eskimo crew, and sent him out. On the first attempt he was washed overboard. We hauled him aboard again and the next attempt was successful. As soon as the anchors were slipped we were picked up by the seas and carried ashore. We saved all we could from the sea but we were unfortunate enough to lose all our provisions. Everything was totally spoiled by salt water with the exception of three salt codfish, which had to do us for an unknown period.

As far as our boat was concerned we could do nothing more now. She was resting peacefully on the sand, so we decided to get a few hours much needed sleep. On the seventeenth, carrying our rifles and ammunition, the three fish, a violin and the main jib of the boat—the last article to provide us with shelter during the nights—we started on our walk to the post. We estimated the distance to be about one hundred miles, but how long it was going to take us to get there we had no idea, as the ground was covered with snow two feet deep in the valleys.

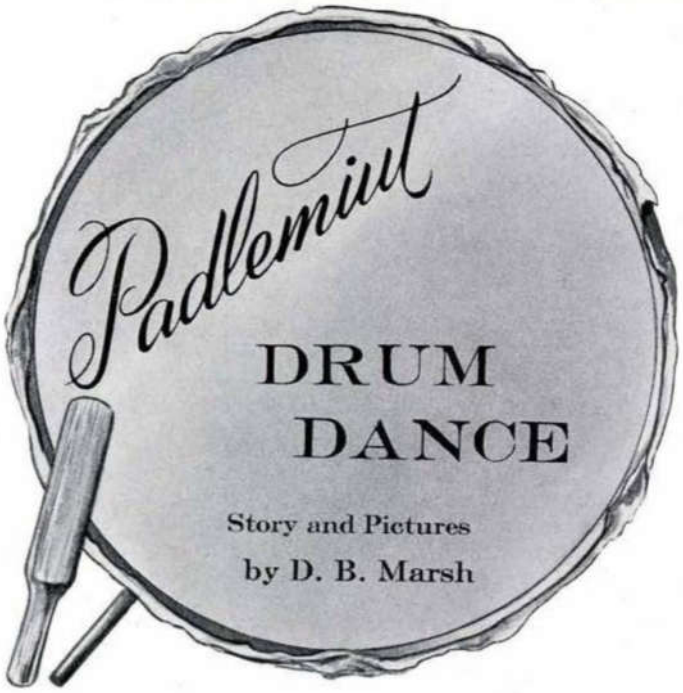
On the first day out we kept to the shore line and had fairly good walking on the sandy beaches. For food we killed several sea birds, roasted them in an open fire and washed them down with water. On this first day's walking I wore the bottoms off my boots. Towards evening when we were very tired we decided to hole up for the night. To do this we kicked away snow until we got down to the ground, piled it up on the sides as high as we could, then put the jib which we were carrying, over the top. This made a fair shelter. We crawled in, not caring whether it was cold or warm, and in a very short time we were sleeping.

The next day was a repetition of the one before, except that I was compelled to cut our jib into strips and wrap them about my feet for boots. The next day which was the nineteenth, we arrived at an Eskimo camp, and from the hill which we were then on we could see a boat in the distance. Of course we did not know whether this boat was coming in or going out, but as soon as we arrived at the camp we were told it was going into the post, so we borrowed kyaks and immediately went aboard. It was loaded with men, women and children and was totally becalmed. The men were just sitting there waiting for the wind, all sails were set and the whole thing gave the appearance of unlimited time; so we too were compelled to sit and wait for wind. In the meantime our friends made us some tea and gave us something to eat, and while they were doing this we told them of our adventures.

We were drifting along with the current for about two hours when suddenly the wind sprang up from the south and we began moving fast enough. In less time than one would think it was blowing a gale. Our friends became very frightened, especially the children, who began crying, and we were again compelled to make harbour as the boat was an open one and very old. Every time she struck a sea her bows worked in and then out again, like an accordion, while streams of water came through the open seams with the force of a fire hose, and wetted everything within reach. The wind kept increasing steadily and the reefs along the islands showed a continuous strip of white water. An opening to get through to the island could not be seen anywhere. The tiller was then turned over to me and I headed for the most likely spot to get through.

We made it without trouble, and managed to drop anchor in the lee of the island where the water was smooth but the wind as strong as ever. All women and children were put ashore on the island but the men kept with the boat. For four days we were held here and most of the time all the Eskimo were on their knees praying and reading from their bibles. On the twenty-fourth it was fine, and all the women and children were reloaded. We headed for the post and arrived there just before darkness set in. We made up for lack of food and rest by taking a holiday of twenty-four hours, and on the twenty-sixth we set out again to make an effort to save the boat we left on the beach just inside of Charles Island. This was accomplished in nine days, and although we experienced some minor discomforts and difficulties, they were all overcome.

Wakeham Bay, with the "Nascopie" at anchor. The Company buildings are those on the right. Max Sauer



The Drum

CARIBOU parchment is stretched over a circular frame of willow about two and a half feet in diameter. The frame is about one and a quarter inches thick and grooved on the outside so that the string which holds the skin in place will not slip off. The wooden handle by which the drum is held and turned is about ten inches long and has a mortise cut in it, into which the rim fits. The two are then bound closely together with sinew.

If there is a hole in the skin, it is mended by covering it with a piece of almost transparent parchment from the heart of a caribou, which is sewn in place with a fine piece of sinew taken from a caribou's back muscle. A thicker piece of parchment would impair the tone of the drum. When every wrinkle in the drum's surface has been pulled taut, the maker fills his mouth with water and squirts it over the whole surface of the skin, front and back. Then he takes an iron scraper and lightly scrapes both sides. This loosens the skin and enables him to stretch it still tighter over the frame by using a piece of wood like a marlinspike. The loose edges are then carefully rolled under another length of line wound around the rim.

Only a man is allowed to make a drum. For a woman to prepare or stretch the drum skin is taboo.

The Drum Song

Every Eskimo man has at least one song, which he makes up and teaches to his wife, who in turn teaches the other women in the camp. The women sing it while the man drums and dances. Some of the men have several songs, and there are Eskimos with as many as twenty or thirty. Quite a young man may have many songs, which were originally those of another person. This person is always a namesake, and may "give" the songs while he is still alive. The drum songs are of four kinds:

1. Those which recount the personal bravery of the drummer, or tell of some long and famous trip he has made in the past.

2. Those which deprecate his inability to obtain enough food for his family. Needless to say, only good hunters can afford to sing this type of song.

3. Very similar to the second group are those telling how the hunter has to subsist on food which others give him. Usually the owner of such a song always has plenty, and gives freely to his less fortunate friends.

4. Those which poke fun at the white men and their peculiarities. One Eskimo has a song which describes a missionary's wife: "She had a waist like a wasp, and two front teeth like a walrus. . . ."

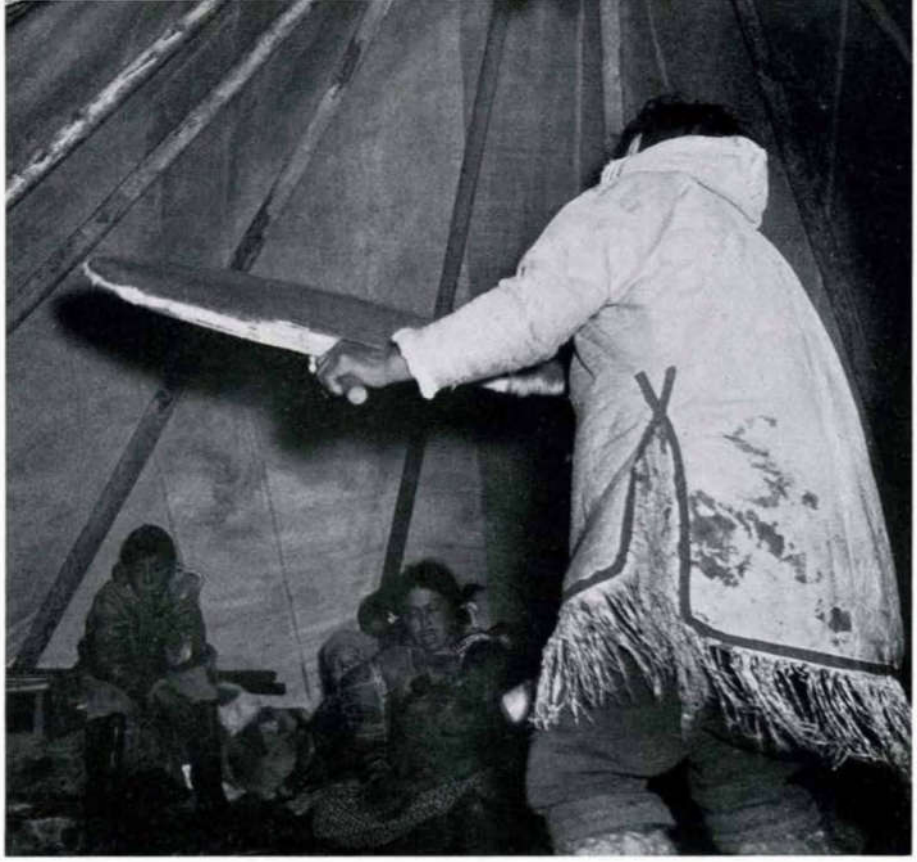
The Drum Song-and-Dance

Let me describe a drum dance that I attended one summer's evening at Eskimo Point, on the west coast of Hudson Bay. The drum had been made by a hunter called Ootoroot, and it was in his tent that the function was held. By the time I arrived it was already in progress. I sat down on the caribou skin at my host's side, and asked him if he had drummed yet. "No," he said, "the oldest man drums first, then the next oldest, and so on, the young lads drumming last."

It was a strange sight which I beheld. In the very centre stood, or rather crouched, old Kootneeak, the drum held upright in his left hand, while the drumstick was swung in his right. With the stick—a bottle-shaped piece of wood about a foot long—he hit the rim on one side of the handle, causing the drum to turn in his hand. As it swung round, he hit it on the other side, knocking it back to the first position. While he drummed, he bobbed up and down slightly and moved round in a small circle with little hopping steps. His long hair streamed in the breeze caused by his movement and that of the drum, and the tail of his artiggi swayed to and fro as he moved up and down. The huge shadow thrown by the drum and his figure danced across the surface of the bell-like tent, intermittently blotting out the faces of the women and men sitting around.

In perfect unison the women swayed slightly forward and sang Kootneeak's song. Their streaming hair and the half light seemed to make even more barbaric the chant of the song. They sang one stanza in a monotone and then added, "*Aya ya, aya ya ya, aya ya*"; then the next stanza of the song, and again the interminable "*Aya ya.*" Some of the women had children asleep in the pouches on their backs, but the majority had left theirs at home. Outside this circle of women, the men sat or lounged, watching the drummer, most of them smoking, so that in a little while

Ootoroot sits in his tent and stretches the drum skin over the willow frame.



Ootoroot drums and dances while the women sing his song. In the background sits Angootiapik smoking his pipe while waiting his turn.

the tent was thick with tobacco smoke, which only added to the weirdness of the scene.

Gradually the drum slowed down as the chant dropped to a lower key and the singing ceased altogether. After a few light beats on the skin of the drum, Kootneeak carefully laid the drum and stick on the floor and, stepping through the ring of singers, took his place at the back.

Angootiapik goes into his song and dance although he has difficulty twirling the big drum.

After a short pause, several of the men called to Ootoroot to drum. He, in accordance with good taste, said, "No, I can't drum," at which they pressed him the more. At last he rose, and, stepping into the centre, picked up the drum with slow deliberate movements. Holding it as Kootneeak had, he lightly touched the surface of it with the stick, and said the first word of his song. Then he stopped and said, "I am no good." Peering into the apex of the tent as if seeking inspiration, he lightly tapped the drum again, this time managing to start the first two words of his song. Suddenly he stopped and said, "My memory is bad, I cannot remember." A slight pause, and at last he started to sing his song. When one stanza was finished, his wife joined in, and then all the other women joined in too.

The tempo increased, and the drum was beaten more wildly than ever, until it seemed that it could hardly stand the force of the beats. Every now and then Ootoroot would yell "Oy!" and beat the harder. By this time he was swaying to and fro with each beat of the drum, entirely oblivious to anything else save his dance. On and on he went, until at last the song ended, and Ootoroot tapped the drum slightly, preparatory to laying it down. But his wife had decided otherwise, and she started another song in which the rest of the women joined her, and he perforce had to continue. Three more songs were sung, and at intervals he would pause and just tap the surface of the drum, only to resume his beating even more violently (if possible) than before.

Man after man drummed, and when one finished another took his place. I timed one or two and they beat for fully four minutes which is no mean feat when it is considered that the drum is held freely in the hand.

At midnight I left the overheated, crowded tent and went home to bed; and as I fell asleep I could still hear in the distance the throbbing of the drum which continued into the early hours of morning.

Catherine, wife of Napoleon Lafferty, H B C river pilot and hunter, with her two children.

Sunday Best

MACKENZIE RIVER DAYS

A Group of Photographs taken some 35 years ago

BY HENRY JONES

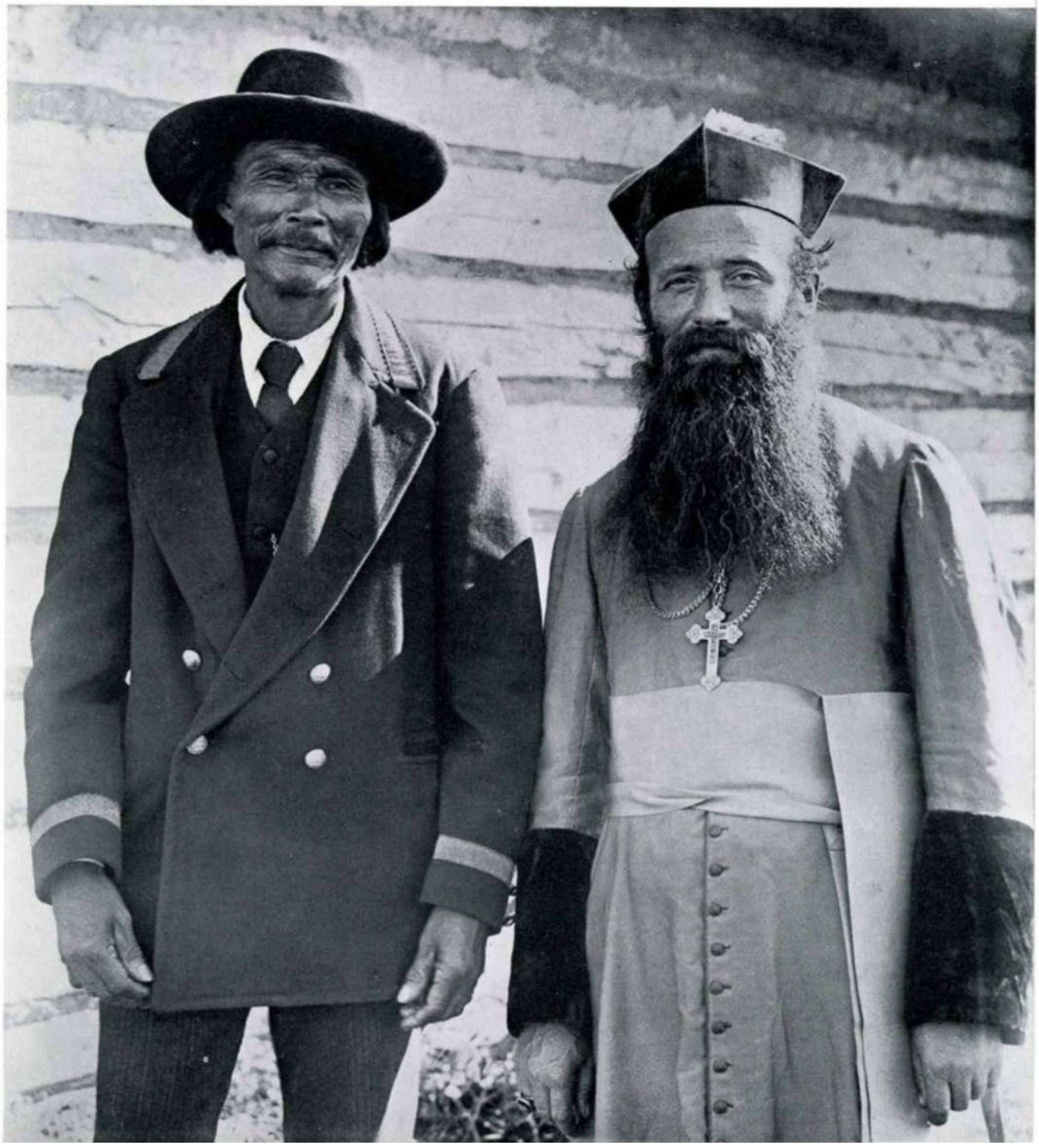
This is the third group of Henry Jones' photographs we have published in *The Beaver*. In the Summer Packet for 1944, there appeared a note on his activities, but we have since been given a more accurate account of his wanderings by his son, Edward G. Jones, of Yellowknife.

Henry Jones was born in Bristol, not Wales. He went to sea as a boy and travelled to India and the Pacific. When the Swedish balloonist Andree was lost in 1897 in an attempt to reach the North Pole from Spitzbergen, Jones joined a search party which put up several caches of food, clothing, and prefabricated cabins in Greenland and the Spitzbergen group of Islands, where the remains of the expedition were found in 1930.

Coming back to England, he heard of the Yukon Gold Rush and decided to join it. His party got as far as Fort Smith, when the death of the leader broke it up. Some went on to the Yukon, others back to England; but Jones stayed in the country. He married a native girl at Fort Simpson, where he worked intermittently for the Company. For the Smithsonian and the American Museum he collected specimens and data along the Mackenzie valley and east along the Arctic Coast. In later years at Fort Resolution he operated a machine shop in the summer and did developing and printing in the winter. He died as recently as 1935, leaving in an attic at Resolution a pictorial record of Mackenzie River days that is without equal.

Men of the North

Bishop Breynat and Chief Vital, Fort Resolution, 1912.



Indians gambling on Treaty Day.

Sinners and Saints at Resolution, 1913

Children of the R.C. Mission school with Sister McQuillan.

Dog toboggans ready to start on a trip.

Hay River Huddle

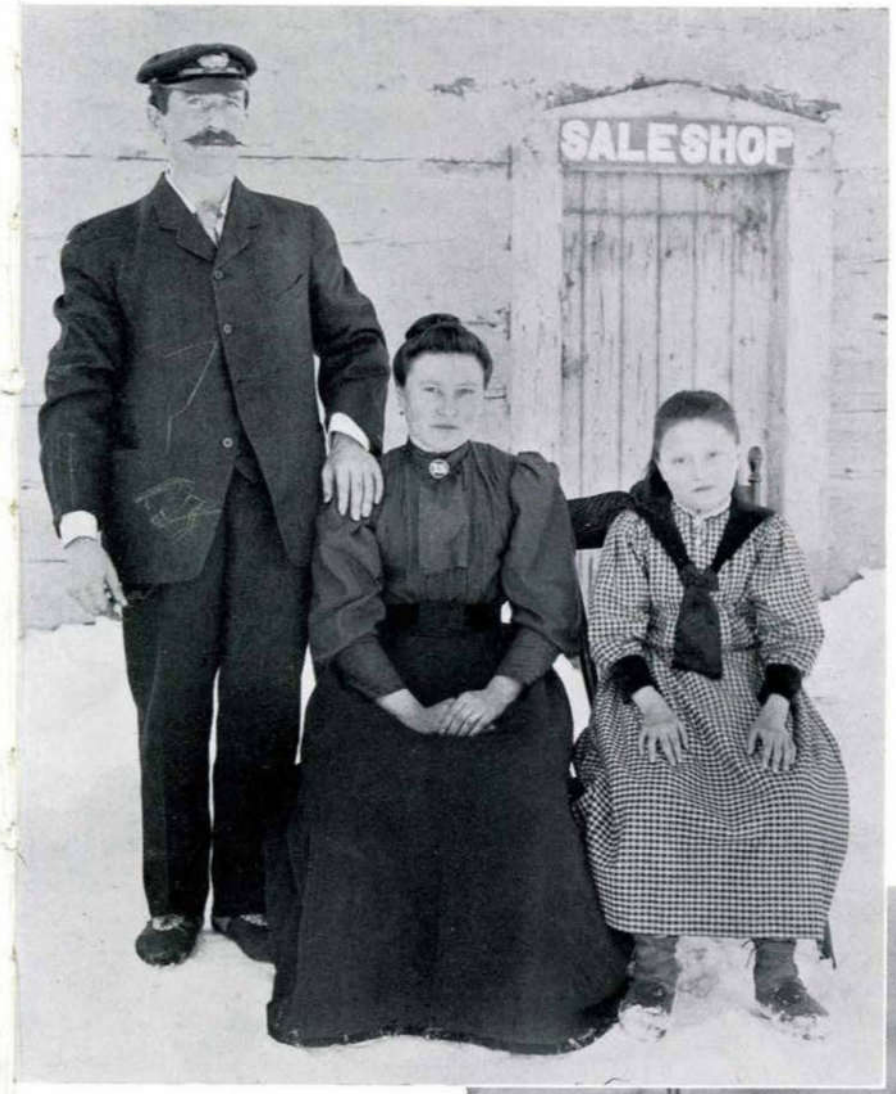
As it was in the beginning . . .

Post Manager J. F. Cunningham (centre) and Clerk Louis Roy value a skin brought into the Resolution store by Joseph Hoole, Interpreter.

Women at Work

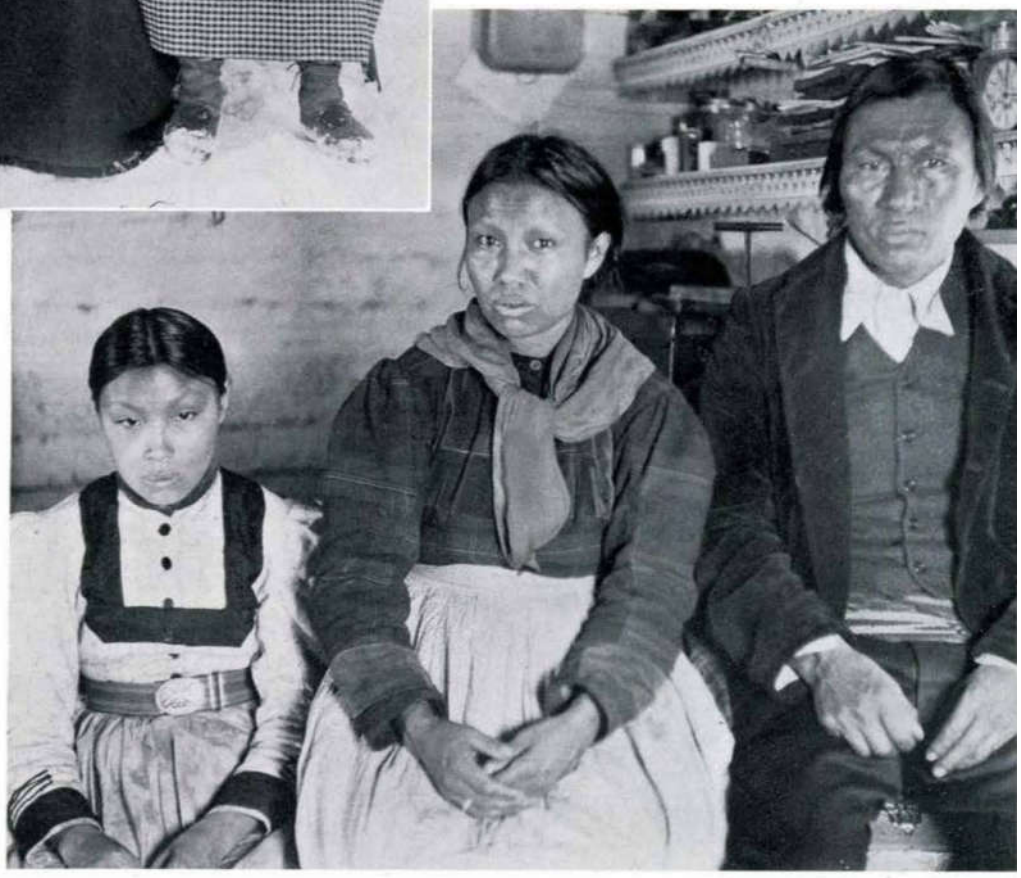
Cutting a birch tree for sap.

Margaret Sayene and her mother-in-law dress a moosehide while an unidentified small boy looks on.



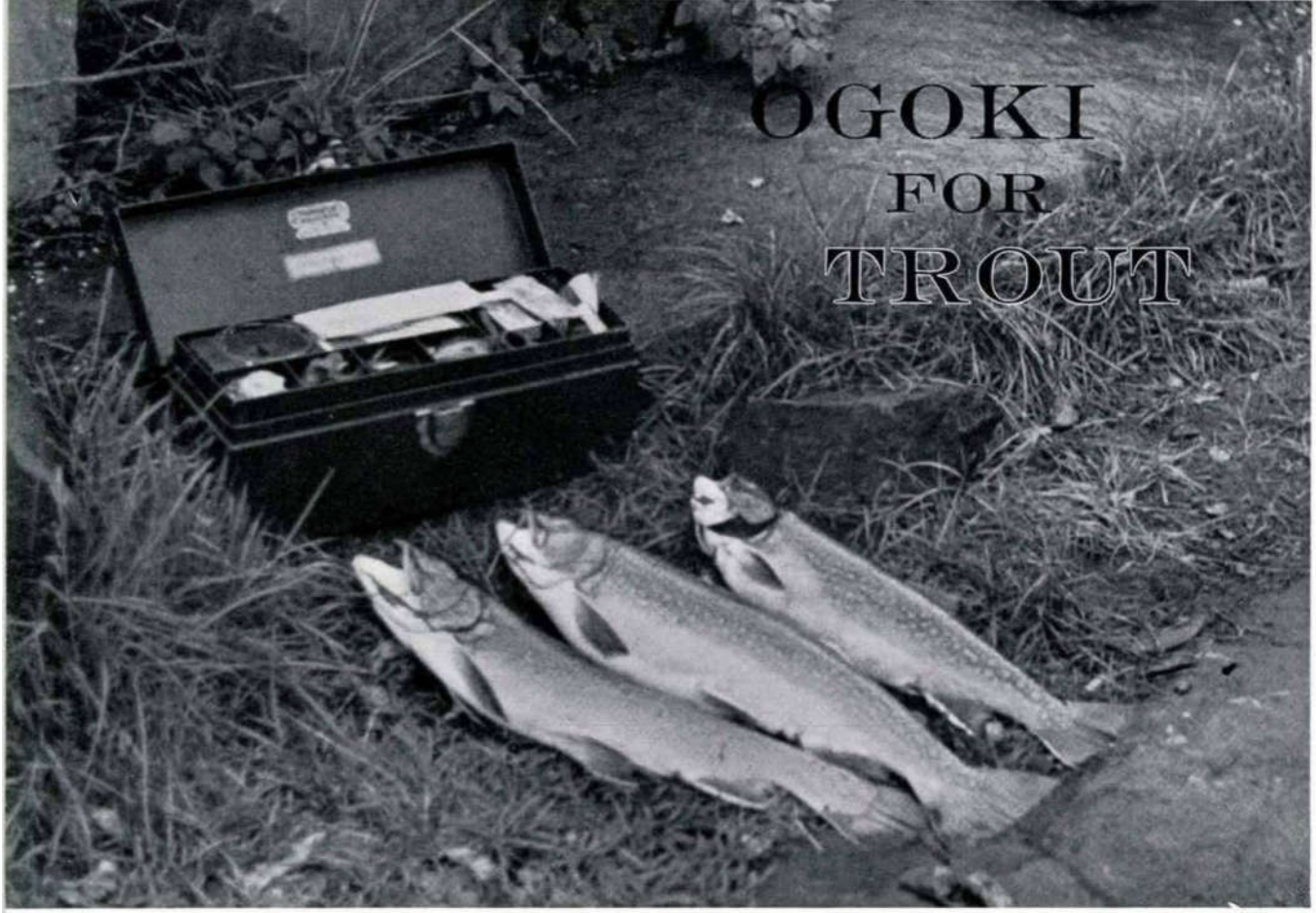
Post Manager La Moelle with his wife and her sister. Hay River, 1910.

Red and White



Kotah and family, natives from Liard River, in Indian guest room, Fort Simpson.

OGOKI FOR TROUT



Three beauties from Ogoki pools.

Story and Pictures
by Edwin Mills

Mr. Mills tells here of another of his fishing trips by plane into the Albany-Ogoki country—an angler's paradise.

Left to right: standing, Chris Rich, David and Gilbert Baxter; sitting, the author, his son Ted, H. H. Levy.

GOOD-BYE, fellows; meet you again in two weeks' time, and don't waste any fish!" Genial George Melville, manager of the Austin Airways, shouted to us from the window of the Fairchild, as Chuck gave her the gun. Once more we were on our own; this time on Ogoki Lake, directly north of Nakina on the C.N.R., and in the heart of the great Albany River watershed, where speckled trout grow to unbelievable size in the icy muskeg streams and roaring rapids of the great northern rivers.

For many years, I have been in the habit of taking a short angling holiday in that marvellous country. Each time, I return refreshed and contented, with good health and pleasant recollections of old friendships renewed and new ones which are continually being added. My growing boy has accompanied me on my last three trips and, while we do not catch all the fish in the world, we never fail to get our share.

It took me many years of enquiry to work into the heart of the Albany watershed. The great drawback was the time it took by canoe to reach the good speckled trout areas. True, there are excellent rivers

bordering on the transcontinental railways, but if one wishes to reach and probe the mysteries of virgin trout waters, and is restricted, as I am, to a brief vacation, there is no way to overcome this except by plane from railway to fishing area. This is also a good reason why the Albany has never been, and probably never will be, fished out—at least not for many years.

This year I did my usual January fishing at my office desk with a map of the Patricia district before me and decided that, as I like low water fishing, we might try the Ogoki below the lake. Enquiries were made, and we found that the lake was being fished for sturgeon this year and it would be possible to fly in.

Luck was with us, for the Indians fishing at Ogoki Lake had piled up such a large catch of sturgeon that the fish were in danger of spoiling, due to the shortage in plane service. A lay-off of one or two of these fishermen for a week or so enabled us to secure them as guides, and, although they had never fished speckled trout, their wonderful qualities as rivermen were all that we needed.

Consequently, our party of three trout seekers, with three temporarily unemployed sturgeon fishermen, set off down the Ogoki River and made our first camp at the head of the famous Speckled Trout Rapids where much spectacular fishing has been had in the past by eminent members of the angling fraternity.

When you are a total stranger to a river and there is a mile or so of continuous rapids, it is a nice problem to locate your fish, for the big ones often congregate in one spot. After a certain amount of trial and error, we found them, however, and had the pleasure of taking quite a number of wonderful speckled trout and returning several of them to the water unhurt. The satisfaction we realized in doing this was considerable.

The first morning my partner elected to fish the shore line and, so as not to conflict, I took my boy and one canoe and dropped down through a series of rapids and small falls for about half a mile. We cast about at intervals when a likely spot presented itself. Plenty of pike and walleyes, but no trout!

After lunch, it occurred to us that we should be working back, and although we had tried literally dozens of barren pools, one in particular, away up near camp, had seemed trouty in appearance. I cannot tell you why it looked this way. We had not been on the river before, and had no directions as to the exact location of places where fish had previously been found. However, with the experience born of many hours' seeking after trout, a sort of extra sense sometimes develops as to their whereabouts. This one pool back upstream had some indefinable quality that made it look good, and there was no use wasting time elsewhere until we tried it out thoroughly.

We worked our way slowly back up to the spot. Ted went ashore to stretch his legs and I poled along to the head of the pool where the water seemed to ripple over a shallow entrance at right angles to the main body of the river. It was four in the afternoon, a good time for a rise.

Upstream work at low water levels on the lower Ogoki.

George Baxter, chief of the Martin Fall band of the Albany, with his wife, son David, and other children at Ogoki Lake.

Ted's cast brought a yell that a large fish had followed it in. Thinking it to be the usual jackfish of the back water, I suggested he watch his light tackle. He cast again, had a heavy strike and shortly let out a war whoop of the large economy size! He was into a huge trout, and made no bones about it. On its eventual netting we both went into a song and dance, for everything pointed to our having found the trout Eldorado ourselves without any professional guidance.

Before evening that grand pool had yielded six of the finest trout I have ever seen. Ted's first big one was the tops, but the rest were pretty much of a size, approximately five and one-half pounds and about twenty-two inches in length. It is peculiar how trout in one pool will always seem about equal in size. Two of these giant fish filled our aluminum reflector and sufficed to send all six of us away from dinner so uncomfortably full that we had to walk around our island to work it off.

Next day our Indians wanted to meet the plane at the landing beach upriver and send out their sturgeon, which were slowly rotting in the muskeg. We had previously arranged for them to do this, and to have any available trout taken out as well, subsequently to be iced and expressed home.

After that, when our guides had returned, we decided to explore down river and made an early morning start. Half way down the long rapids the heavens opened up and in very short order we looked like a bunch of drowned rats. However, the blessed sun came out and we dried out nicely, arriving at the forks of the north and south branch of the Ogoki towards evening.

A good camp site was picked and my partner elected to go fishing nearby and by the light of a full moon.

A sturgeon fisherman cleans his catch preparatory to shipping it out by plane.

This view of the Waboose dam under construction was taken by Mr. Mills in 1941 and sent to illustrate his article in the June 1942 "Beaver." But owing to a request by the censors it was not published at that time.

Six beauties fell to his flies before it was too dark to cast, a memorable day in his fishing calendar.

Again we found trout everywhere, not so large as at the upper rapids, but in greater numbers. This was fly water *par excellence*, and we exclaimed many times on the size of the trout and the shallowness of the river. Personally, low water is my greatest enjoyment, as pools can be found more easily and compensate for the extra work entailed with the canoe.

After a few days at this spot, we thought it best to return upstream, giving ourselves plenty of time to reach the plane landing at Ogoki Lake on the date we had arranged. The trip was uneventful and after a barren hour at the famous pool we stopped again at our first camp site at the outlet of the lake.

Next day we threaded our way slowly through boulders and intricate shoals to the lake and the landing. It took us a full day and we were tired when we camped that evening at the pre-arranged spot.

Ogoki Lake is worth a visit. There is a huge dam at Waboose Rapids, another fifty miles upriver, which cuts off a considerable amount of the flow into this big lake. The water above the dam is redirected southward into Lake Nipigon, and thence by the Nipigon River to Lake Superior and so on eastward to assist in hydro developments from the Sault to Montreal.

The year before there had been so much rainfall, the water flowed freely over the top of the Waboose dam and on down the Ogoki to Hudson Bay. This year things were different, a dry season meant a low volume of water on the upper part of the river and its tributaries, and we found the waters of Ogoki Lake nearly ten feet below the marks on the shore lines.

We had great difficulty getting through the boulders to reach the first rapids; indeed, only with rivermen of the highest calibre and accustomed to this work could we have reached it. Then at the forks we found the north channel down river too shallow for passage, all traffic from Ogoki post following the south channel this year. If the water drops much further, even canoe passage will be dangerous.

There seems to be plenty of fish in Ogoki Lake. Our Indians set a whitefish net off our camp and in the morning took from it about thirty fine fat fellows. The commercial fishing possibilities of the lake would seem to be considerable.

All packed up, we waited a full day at the lake for our plane. The weather was beautiful and we expected it momentarily. Then along about four o'clock we noticed the Indians camped on the opposite shore were putting off with their families to do a bit of berry picking. No plane to-night, we thought sadly.

We decided to make the most of things by cooking a bang-up meal. A fat whitefish smeared with Crisco was baked in the reflector. Our remaining can of peas and one of corn were opened. We served the first course and suddenly sat up to listen. The plane!

It was the plane all right, and George was in a hurry to get back before dark. We looked regretfully at that beautiful whitefish, put our bags on board and sailed away. As we circled the island I looked down at our camp site and already a dozen little Indians were making short work of the dinner we had had to forego. "George," I said regretfully, "we had a great time and enjoyed ourselves thoroughly and, furthermore, not a thing was wasted—not even a nice baked whitefish!"

At the gate of Fort Chipewyan in 1921. A. Richter

"EMPORIUM OF THE NORTH"

By Guy H. Blanchet

ALEXANDER Mackenzie gave Fort Chipewyan this imposing name at a time when it was the farthest outpost in the vast northern wilderness. At that time and under the existing circumstances the establishment was one of the utmost importance. It represented a daring advance into the unknown North; it offered security in its defences and its rude comforts seemed luxurious in contrast to life in the wilderness. To Indians who were still living in the Stone Age, its shelves appeared to be stocked with untold wealth, while to voyageurs of the brigades, after their long journeys across the country, the fort was a haven of rest.

Most of the cities of the West are upstarts compared with Fort Chipewyan, though they have far outgrown the modest settlement of today. When the fur trade was extended farther into the North, Fort Chipewyan lost much of its importance and most of the recent developments have bypassed it. The life of the settlement is now chiefly that of the older North, the traders and the missions, a gathering place for Indian hunters, and a home for older people who have retired from an active life in the country.

The story of the establishment of the early forts in this locality is an obscure one, told in old records and narratives, and the locations of some of these forts were known only by old men, most of whom have passed on. In this story of the locality, I have gathered notes from old journals where information is often vague and accidental, and the results of field investigations when I had the benefit of the guidance of old Baptiste Forcie.

The advance into the North by the trader-explorers was by way of Churchill River. Ile à la Crosse, at its headwater lakes, for a time marked the farthest outpost; but tales by the Indians of the richness of the Athabaska country in furs and meat and fish encouraged the traders to cross the divide at Portage la Loche and descend by waters flowing northerly into the unknown.

Peter Pond of Gregory, McLeod & Co. was the first of the traders to descend Athabaska River, and in 1778 he built a fort called Pond's House at the head of Athabaska delta. This establishment has the interest of being the first trading post on waters draining by Mackenzie River to the Arctic. The location of the post is fairly well fixed as near where the Embarras Channel leaves the main river, but nothing remains to mark its site. It was probably at the head of the long curving cut bank, and erosion there has been heavy.

Pond was an adventurous traveller but also a stormy character. He was twice implicated in murders; the second, that of Ross at Ile à la Crosse, involved such notoriety that it led up to the union of Gregory, McLeod & Co. with other traders to form the North West Company, thereby, for a time, ending rivalry. When Pond retired from the country, he compiled a remarkable map of western and northern Canada. He was relatively correct in mapping lakes and rivers known to the traders, and this carried his knowledge as far as Great Slave Lake; but beyond there he went badly astray interpreting Indian reports. He showed the Mackenzie River continuing its western course from Great Slave Lake and discharging into the Pacific. This map he presented to the Empress of Russia, and if the course of the Mackenzie had been as shown it might have provided a highway into the interior for the Russian traders.

Alexander Mackenzie took over the Athabaska District for the new association and arrived at Pond's House in 1787. He spent the winter there, but in the autumn he sent his cousin Roderick to build a new fort on Lake Athabaska. Roderick reported: "After making every possible enquiry and taking every precaution, I pitched on a conspicuous projection that advances a league into the lake . . . six miles east of the river and there I built the fort." This and many other references fix the location as on Old Fort Point of the present maps. This location had the advantages of a commanding position with wide views of the lake and an excellent fishery. The weakness of the location, and what probably led to its abandonment later, was that a wide stretch of exposed waters of the lake separated it from the main camping places of the Indians about Pointe aux Sables at the present settlement.

It was from Roderick's fort that Alexander Mackenzie set out on his two great explorations, to the Arctic and to the Pacific, and it was there in the lonely isolation of the long winter that he wrote his narrative.

For twelve years the fur trade was carried on from Fort Chipewyan without opposition. In 1791 a party of Hudson's Bay men arrived there, but they came to explore, not to trade. Philip Turnor, the Company's surveyor, sent at the request of the British Government to take observations for latitude and longitude in the North, was in charge of the party, and with him were Malchom Ross and Peter Fidler. Pond's map had been brought to the attention of the Government. It showed a comparatively short distance between Great Slave Lake and the Pacific Ocean, and suggested an easy access for Russian traders. Turnor selected Fort Chipewyan for his observations, and he was hospitably received there by Roderick McKenzie, in charge for the Nor'westers at the post on Old Fort Point.

The H B C men spent the winter in a house they built "about 600 yards SSE of the Canadian Settlement on the side of a bay well sheltered from the Northerly wind," and in May they left for York Factory.

David Thompson connected his surveys of the northern waterways with Fort Chipewyan in 1804, by which time the fort had been established on the north shore in its present location. There is no available record of the date of the move to the north shore, but a number of important events which occurred during the interval between 1791 and 1804 help to fix the date of its establishment.

In 1800 the X Y Co., formed by Alexander Mackenzie, settled at Chipewyan. James McKenzie was in charge of the North West fort at the time and his journal makes reference to incidents that help to fix localities and dates. On May 23, 1800, he notes, "This morning the Pothies [X Y Co.] arrived and encamped on the little island near the Fort." He mentions posting a sentry on the high ground back of the fort to keep watch on the Pothies and the activities of the Indians. He also refers to Roderick's fort as the "old Fort." "Old" was used at that time in the sense of "abandoned" rather than ancient.

In 1802 Peter Fidler returned to Lake Athabaska and built a trading fort there. No matter how vast the wilderness, rival traders built their forts close together. The North Westers had the advantage of the commanding position at the location of the present fort. The Indian camps extended from Pointe aux Sables to beyond the Little Island with the rugged Dog's Head beyond. Fidler had little choice. He selected English Island across from the Dog's Head for his location and there he built Nottingham House.

The situation in 1802 is fairly clear. Roderick's fort was abandoned for trade but still used as a fishery;

Chipewyan—the fort (foreground) and settlement. The gate pictured on the opposite page can be seen between the second and third large buildings. In the distance is the wharf where the sternwheelers and tugs from Waterways and Fitzgerald tie up. R.C.A.F.

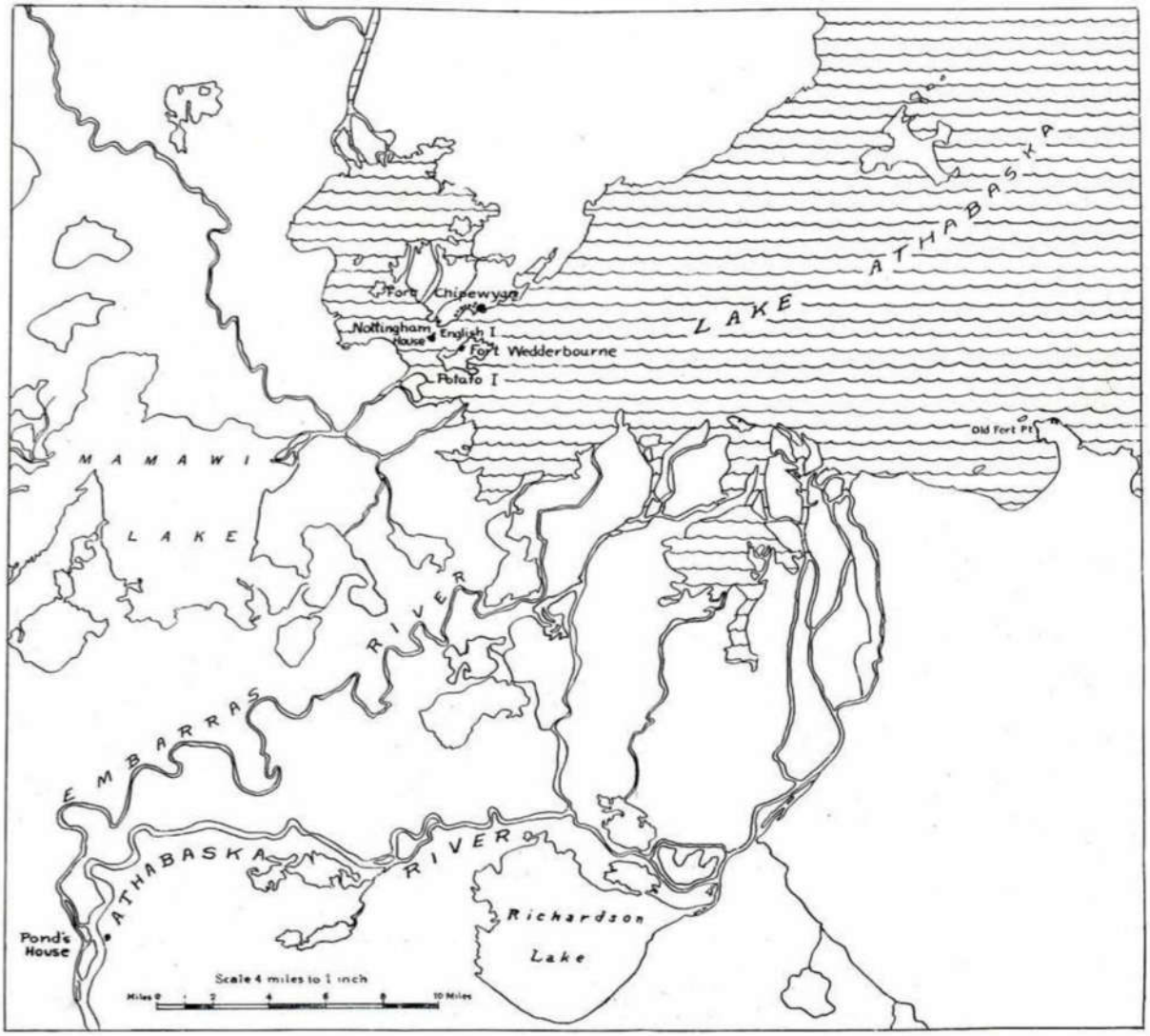
the move may have taken place about 1798. A fort had been built on the site of the present establishment by the North Westers. The Hudson's Bay Company were located on English Island and the X Y Co. had settled either on Little Island or more likely on the shore to which it is almost connected.

The North Westers, with the advantages of priority and position, carried on the war for furs ruthlessly. In 1804 they absorbed the X Y Co., and two years later Fidler was forced to abandon Nottingham House and leave the country. The first round went to the North Westers, and again they monopolized the fur trade in the Athabaska country. Of the forts built in the locality, Roderick McKenzie's Fort Chipewyan disappeared in course of time except for the stone chimneys. These were still standing up until some forty years ago, but they provided a convenient source for net stones in winter, being easily broken, and had completely disappeared before 1925 when I visited the locality. However, I had Baptiste Forcie as guide, and he well remembered seeing the old chimneys and where they were located. Old Fort Point answers Roderick McKenzie's description of "a person sitting with her arms extended, the palms forming the point." There was the island to the west, back of which was the fishery. There were old fishermen's huts and ruins of log buildings at the fishery but Baptiste led past them to the extremity of the point. A clearing there was overgrown with vegetation. We searched among this and finally located some fire-blackened stones which had formed the base of one of the chimneys. Further search revealed the remains of another chimney at the edge of the bank which was being cut away by lake erosion. These were the only evidences of this historic post, and it may not be long before the lake obliterates even these meagre remains.

English Island preserves in its name the old custom to refer to the Hudson's Bay Company people as English and the North Westers as Canadians. The island is thickly overgrown with scrub. A small cove on the south shore provides the only landing place for canoes and back of this in the woods there are piles of chimney stones. The buildings were burnt as soon as they were abandoned.

There have been too many recent buildings in the vicinity of the Little Island at Colin Fraser's landing

The first Fort Chipewyan, whence Sir Alexander Mackenzie set out on his two great voyages of exploration, was situated on Old Fort Point.



for any trace of the site of the X Y Co's fort to remain, but the old people remember hearing of a trading post having been located there. The "Pothies" played a very small part in the story of Fort Chipewyan and left little record of their presence there.

Nine years after Nottingham House was abandoned the Hudson's Bay Company sent a strong expedition under John Clarke to Lake Athabaska. Clarke was confronted by the same difficulties as had faced Fidler in finding a suitable location. English Island was a poor site, too restricted and too open to observation and attack from Fort Chipewyan. As there was no suitable place on the mainland, there remained the chain of islands that mask Fort Chipewyan from the lake. Of these Clarke chose Coal Island (now known as Potato Island) and on it he built Fort Wedderburn.

In 1820, George Simpson was sent out from London to Fort Wedderburn and, although new to the North and the fur trade, did much to strengthen the position of the H B C in Athabaska against such experienced opponents as Simon McGillivray and Samuel Black. After the union of the two companies the following spring, Simpson was made governor of the huge Northern Department, which included Athabaska District. In that district, all the H B C forts were abandoned in favour of the rival N. W. Co. establishments. Fort Wedderburn was deserted, and Chipewyan became its headquarters.

Fort Wedderburn suffered the fate of abandoned places. Although it had played an important part in the stirring pre-union days, it sank into ruin, forgotten and unmarked even by the name of "Old Fort" which was given to many lesser places. However, although wood may crumble away or burn, chimney stones remain and, often centuries later, mark the place where a habitation once stood. The chimney stones of Fort Wedderburn may still be found in a rubble heap at the edge of the woods, back of the bay on the north side of the island.

Under the new regime, Fort Chipewyan played an important part. It was the headquarters of the Athabaska District. But with the passing of time, conditions changed. The birch bark gave place to the York boat and this was superseded by wood-burning stern wheel steamers. The centre of trade moved northward down Mackenzie River. While Fort Chipewyan lost its importance in the fur trade, it retained a significance, partly in its site on the great northern waterways and largely in the part it had played in the early history of the North.

Two episodes mark the passing of time at the Fort. In the 70's the fort was completely rebuilt by Roderick MacFarlane except for the blacksmith shop. He built on the site of the original North West fort and followed much the same pattern. Although the need for palisades and bastions had passed away, these were retained in MacFarlane's fort. They enclosed the store and warehouse, the great house of the factor and the mess. About 1924 I was shown the outlines of the bastions by Forcie, who remembered seeing them.

Time passed. Fort Chipewyan was affected by the tide that swept past it. New people came. Fresh interests developed. The fur trade diminished and new business was created.

Fort Chipewyan as an establishment in the fur trade was on its way to become an "Old Fort." The palisades were replaced by fences, and the council chamber was turned into a cow stable. To meet the altered conditions, the fort was abandoned as a place

Indian camp at Chipewyan, 1911. G. M. Douglas

of business and a store of a more modern character was built in a situation more convenient to the people. But still the fort retained a dignity, its site remained imposing, its buildings preserved something of the life of the past.

In its early days, Fort Chipewyan had possessed a famous library including manuscripts of expeditions into the far reaches of the country. This library was commented on by many of the early travellers. Some of the old volumes are now in the library of Hudson's Bay House, Winnipeg.

Fort Chipewyan saw the drama of Northern Indian life played out. It witnessed the early struggle between the Crees, advancing from the south, driving the Chipewyans back to the Barren Grounds. At the fort the Chipewyans continued to be chiefly hunters and, by keeping to the wilderness, they have preserved much of their customs and purity of race. The Cree was more adaptable. He became a trapper, his life centred about the fort and he gave up the ways of his fathers. In course of time, through mixture with the whites and accepting their way of life he lost much of his identity.

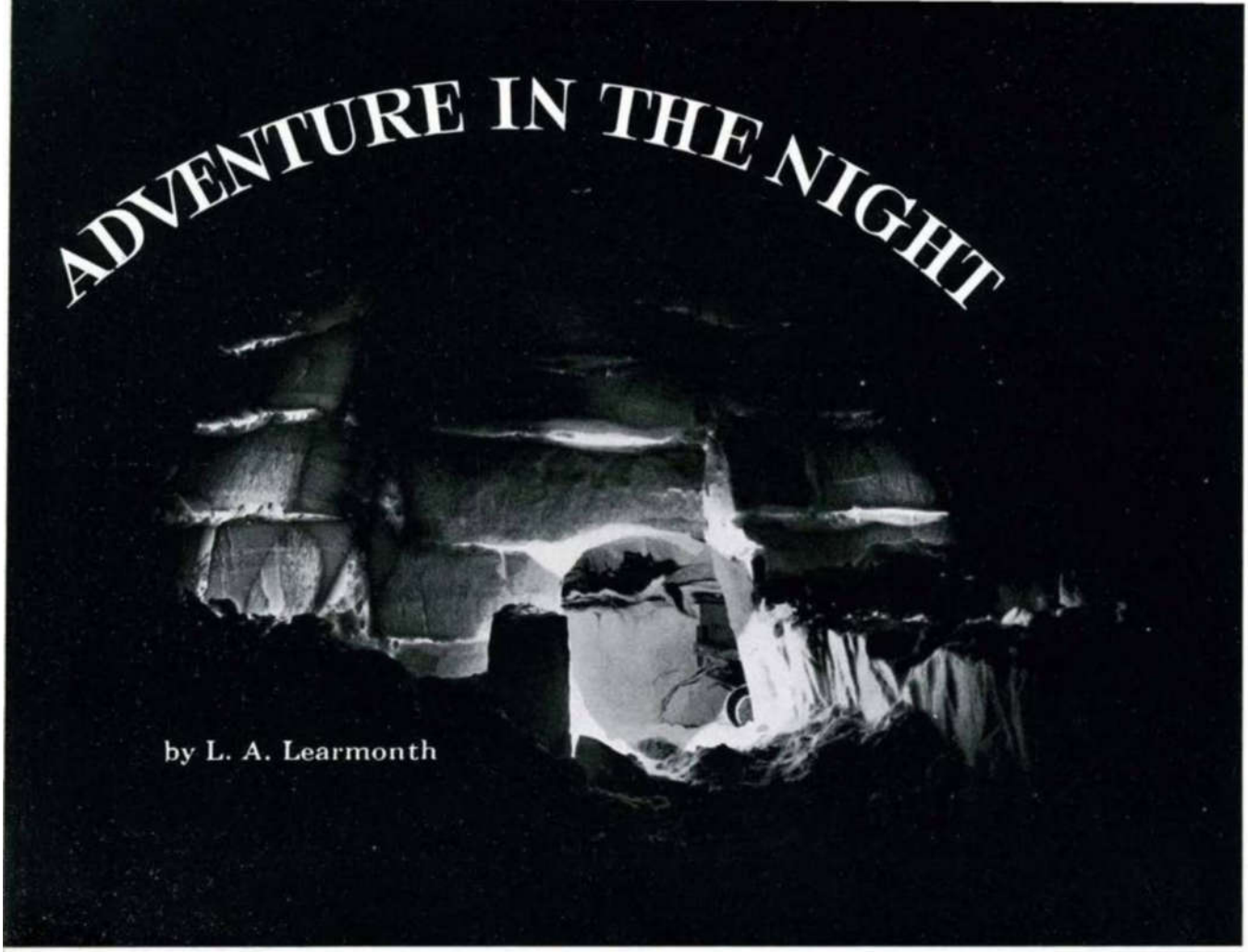
The detachment of Fort Chipewyan from the new life in the North tends to preserve its remoteness from the great world and to associate it with the past. The old fort strengthens the illusion, recalling the time when a trading post required palisades and bastions, when the fur trade was a struggle against men and Nature and when it called to its service bold and adventurous spirits.

From the commanding position of the fort, it is not difficult to recreate the past, to vision fleets of birch-bark canoes straggling down the lake, bringing the people from their distant hunting grounds; to picture the smoke-stained lodges in their settings of lake and woods and rock; and to reanimate the fort with the picturesque life of its early days. One can sense the thrill roused by the cry, "The Brigade!" when the great six-fathom canoes emerged through the islands, the sun flashing on paddles and foaming bow waves and picking out the scarlet of bonnet and sash. Here was news of the great world—though perhaps a year old—and security for the future in the new outfit.

One may imagine too the emotions of the voyageurs when, after their long and incredibly difficult voyage, and, after many months separation from their families, there opened up the wide view of the lake and they saw their destination, far in the distance, white buildings set on the bold rocky shore . . . "the great fort"—Fort Chipewyan.

ADVENTURE IN THE NIGHT

by L. A. Learmonth



Trail igloo at Night. Inside can be seen the skins on the sleeping bench. J. H. Webster

THE Northern lights have seen strange sights," sang the poet; but for all the sights they may have witnessed, or Robert Service ever imagined them to have seen, it is doubtful if they ever looked down upon a stranger one than I will here attempt to describe:

On towards the end of January 1939, a party of Netchilingmiuts—the Eskimos of the Magnetic Pole area—travelling with three sleds, and comprising five men, one woman, and two children, were returning to their home at Arviktootchiak on the east coast of Boothia Peninsula. They had been on a trading expedition to Fort Ross on Bellot Strait. It was bitterly cold, with a hard nor'west wind sweeping the ground-drift before it, and they had travelled far and were tired.

When they finally decided to make camp for the night, it was late, with darkness setting in, and being cold and exhausted they were not too particular about the location of the camp site. They just threw down the sled anchor and brought up at the first good-sized bank of firm snow they came upon. This happened to be on the sea ice, but close inshore and near tide cracks.

Seal spears were pulled out from under the sled lashings, and with them they tested the nearest snow bank for *iglookshak*—that is, snow of the right consistency and depth for building. The snow proving satisfactory, knives were produced, and a couple of small igloos joined together, with only one entrance (as is the custom), were quickly built. While some cut and fitted the snow blocks, the others got out the long dog chains, stretched them between protruding tongues of shore ice, and made fast the ends. Then the dogs were unhitched and tethered to this chain at wide enough intervals to prevent them from fighting and stealing each other's feed.

By this time the interiors of the snowhouses were completed, and the women and children had crawled inside to receive the sleeping gear and other camp equipment which was unloaded from the sleds and passed in to them. Then, before the Primus stoves were lit, all snow adhering to the sleeping-robes, platform skins, and clothing was carefully beaten off with snow beaters before they were spread out on the sleeping platforms.*

By the time everything inside the snowhouses was adjusted, the children safely stowed away on the inner sleeping bench, stoves lit, and water from melted snow boiling in the kettles, the men outside had fed the dogs, plugged all the chinks between the snow blocks, shovelled quantities of fine snow over and around the igloos, and banked them well to protect them from the freezing wind. Then they too crawled inside, and closed the entrance with a big snow block (though leaving a small hole in it and another in the dome above for ventilation). They beat the snow off their garments and finally pulled the ice off their meagre moustaches and chin whiskers and from the wolverine trim round their artiggi hoods. Now all was set for

a big meal of frozen salmon, hardtack and tea—then a cigarette and so to bed.

But away on in the dead o' night, when all inside the igloos was snug and quiet, Kamitcheak's wife, the only woman in the party, was suddenly wakened by hearing, above the hiss of the wind and the ground-drift, the sound of dogs whimpering and barking as if in fear or distress. Quickly she got up, seized a snow knife, and cut a hole in the wall of the snowhouse. Peering out, she saw by the dim light of the aurora and the stars, the chained dogs all struggling in water!

She had scarcely time to comprehend what was happening and to give a shout of warning, when the igloo she was in collapsed, and along with the rest of the camp, dissolved completely away, leaving everyone in the freezing water and scrambling from under the sleeping gear. Provided they have good bedding skins and robes, Eskimos always strip completely when turning in for the night, and the night in question was of that bitter Arctic variety already described, with the temperature about forty below.

There they were, out in the icy darkness, naked and confused and splashing about, grabbing what they could of clothing and bedding and other precious equipment before it was swirled away in the sea, and clearing struggling, fighting dogs from their chains in the two feet or more of fast-freezing water which now covered the campsite—a wild and eerie scene that defies description.

Fortunately, deer skins float like corks, and do not easily become soaked. Everyone was able to rescue his clothes before they had a chance to sink, and running to the higher land, fiercely trampled them in the dry snow which soon soaked up the excess moisture. Then each piece was beaten thoroughly with a snow beater—first the inner artiggi which was hastily pulled on, and then the other articles of clothing—deerskin pants and socks, skin boots, and finally the outer deerskin koolitak. When that was done, the same treatment of trampling and beating was given to the sleeping robes and platform skins.

Only one snow knife was recovered, but with it several substitutes were made from a wooden case of hardtack, and thus armed, all hands hurriedly set to work and constructed a large igloo out of reach of the tide. Kerosene and kerosene-burning stoves were among the items recovered, and so it was that the new snowhouse was soon warmed, clothing and sleeping gear dried, and what could very well have been a tragedy turned out to be only an amazing adventure. No lives were lost, though some of the party suffered from frostbite.

The cause of this extraordinary incident was evidently that the new-moon tides were on, and the pent-up rising water had suddenly burst out with a rush through one of those cracks which generally divides the inshore ice, anchored to the rocks below, from the main body of floating sea ice.

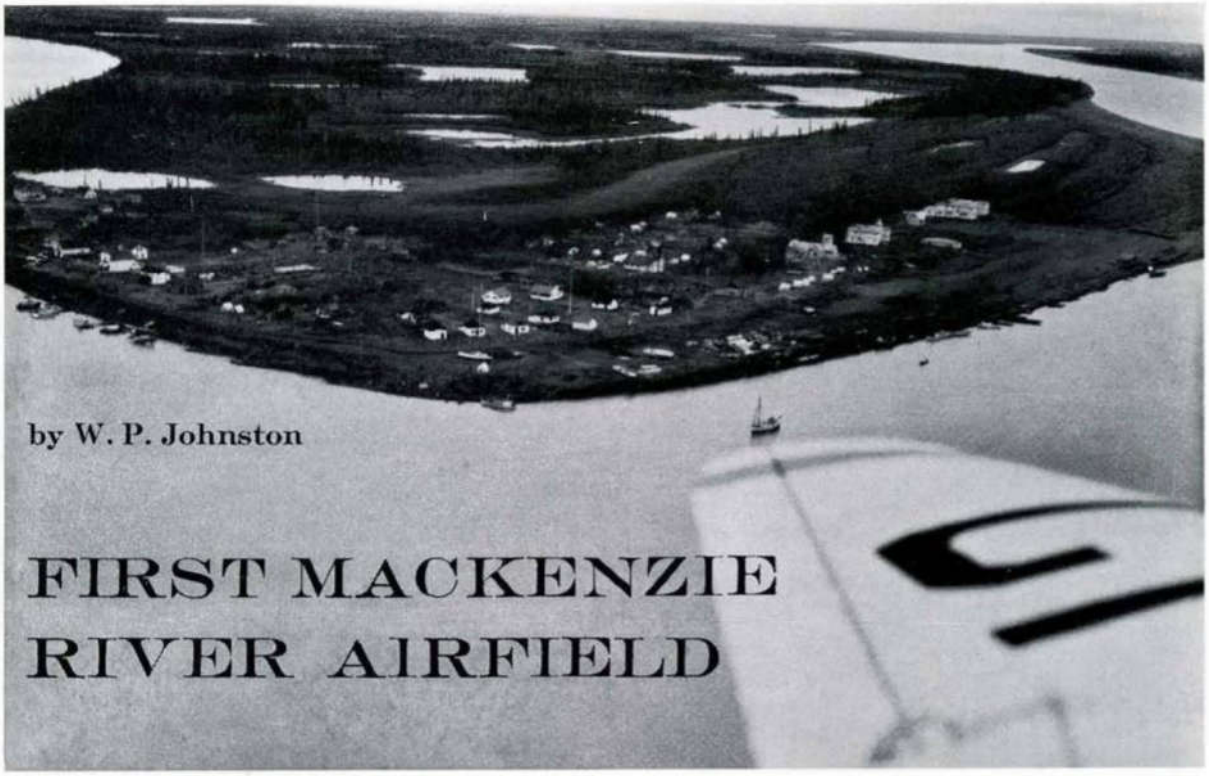
Owing to the speed with which the overflow froze solid, much of their equipment was never recovered, including three rifles and some of the goods they had so recently traded for their hard-earned foxes. Yet, though a rifle is to an Eskimo what a plough is to a farmer, when I met this party a few days after their adventure they were all quite cheerful, saying that it could have been so much worse.

*The procedure usually followed is to place the lower set of caribou skins (which are generally long-haired) hair-side down on the snow of the sleeping platform, and then to lay on top of these the upper set, with the hair-side up. Finally, the sleeping robes are laid on top of these.—L.A.L.

Ohookto (foreground) was one of those caught in the Arctic flood. L.A.L.

Neither Mungg-ah (right) nor the child shown above will ever forget the sea that came in the night. L.A.L.

Adgonik was another of the Eskimos whose igloo was swept away in the darkness. W. Gibson



by W. P. Johnston

FIRST MACKENZIE RIVER AIRFIELD

This photo of Aklavik, taken by Margaret Bourke-White in 1937, shows the flats on the right which were cleared by the local natives in front of the Anglican mission buildings. Courtesy "Life"

The first landing strip along the Mackenzie was laid out in 1937 at Aklavik.

TRAVELLERS along the present Mackenzie River air route have been greatly impressed with the airport facilities at most posts between Edmonton and Norman Wells. During recent years landing fields have been cut out of the bush at various points along the aerial highway pioneered by the commercial pilots of the early thirties.

In the old days air traffic was confined to standard pontoon planes in summer with a change over to ski equipment for winter months. On natural landing places such as lakes and rivers, this method worked successfully with this type of plane, although there were certain drawbacks to the system. During break-up and freeze-up travel was suspended, except for emergency flights which were usually hazardous to air crew and passengers alike.

When the Canol Project started rolling in the summer of 1942, air fields were required for larger planes which could operate continuously throughout the year. Parties of U.S. army engineers and civilian employees were brought in for this job, and in a short time these new landing strips were in daily use by transport planes. Commercial companies were quick to change their machines to meet new conditions.

The honour of having the pioneer air field in the Mackenzie valley does not go, however, to any of the settlements now provided with them, but to Aklavik, that thriving metropolis on the rim of the Arctic.

In August 1937, the famous Russian flyer, Sigismund Levanevsky, with a crew of five in a four-engined craft, left Moscow for Fairbanks, Alaska, following a route which was to take him over the North Pole. The plane never reached its destination and arrangements were quickly made for a search for the missing aviators.

Sir Hubert Wilkins, the noted polar explorer, was asked to organize this search, and he included in his party two well known Canadians, Herbert Hollick-Kenyon and Al Cheesman, men with flying experience in the Arctic and Antarctic. With the long range Consolidated flying boat placed at their disposal, it was decided to make Aklavik the main base of operations. It was from that settlement on the delta of the Mackenzie that the long search flights took off into the unknown; in the fall by flying boat and later during the winter by ski plane.

Sir Hubert called at Hudson's Bay House, Winnipeg, in September 1937 for a talk with Ralph Parsons, Fur Trade Commissioner, and A. D. Copland, Western Arctic District Manager. With their aid he was able to check the availability of supplies at Aklavik, Tuktuk, Baillie Island and Holman Island; and weather conditions and ground conditions generally were also discussed at the meeting. As Sir Hubert knew the delights of receiving unexpected letters from home in far away places, he asked if it would not be possible for his party to relay mail to some of the Company posts they would be visiting on the Arctic coast. Before leaving Hudson's Bay House he went to the Fur Trade Depot and made several purchases of personal equip-

ment for members of his party, which were packed and shipped by air to his winter base at Aklavik.

It was impossible to have sufficient gasoline brought north by boat, so late in the season, to enable any extensive flights to take place. An Alaskan commercial company had a triple-engined plane which could ferry gasoline from Fairbanks, but being fitted with wheels, it was necessary to have a landing field cleared somewhere in the vicinity of Aklavik.

The officer in charge of the local radio station, an aviation enthusiast and holder of a private pilot's license, took on the job of supervising the laying out of the field. He explained what was required to the local Eskimos and Indians, and with their able assistance the first Arctic air port commenced to take shape.

A site was chosen, in fact the only one available, along the mud flats in front of the Anglican mission buildings. The H B C store was visited and yards of white cotton purchased, torn into strips eight inches wide by eager Eskimo women helpers, and placed down the centre and along either end of the clearing. Every willow was removed by knives usually employed in the cutting of snow blocks, and after a hard day's work, the "air port manager" was able to radio, "All clear. Come on in."

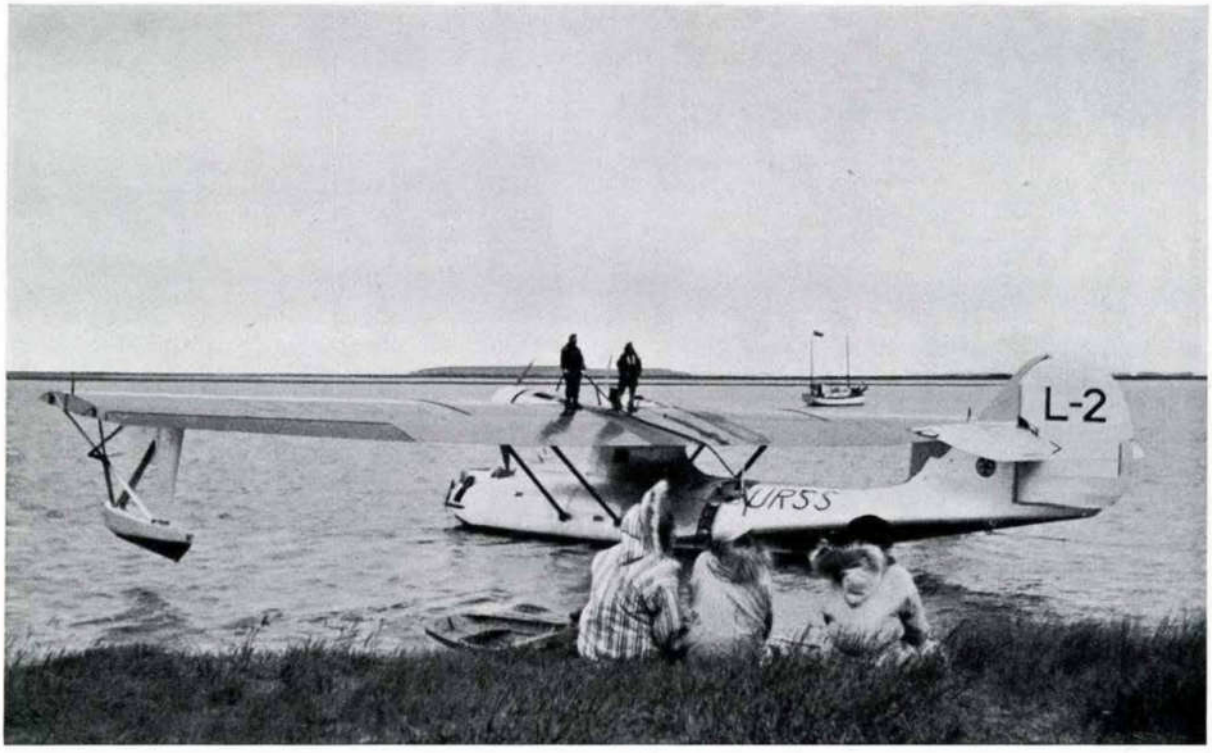
The following afternoon, the entire population was out in numbers which were only equalled by the arrival of the first boat. The anxiously awaited plane, piloted by one of the Wien brothers, circled the village a few times, while the watchers on the ground fidgeted in suspense. With a heavy load of gasoline it was a tricky job setting her down, but the huge *tingmiak*, as the Eskimos called it, made a perfect three-point landing.

The children of the residential school assembled on the river bank cheered loudly and waved a greeting, while the parka-clad natives rushed forward to peer through the many windows of the huge air liner. It was originally intended for carrying passengers, and all seats had been cleared to make room for the cargo.

The pilot and co-pilot expressed their surprise at the splendid landing conditions, and compared Aklavik favourably with many fields in Alaska. Few, if any, of the spectators that day thought that within a very short time it would be an everyday occurrence to see planes of that type flying all over the North.

Sir Hubert Wilkins (left) confers with A. D. Copland and Ralph Parsons (right) at Hudson's Bay House, Winnipeg. Sir George Simpson looks on.

Sir Hubert Wilkins' Consolidated PBY flying boat refuelling at Coppermine.



ON HUDSON'S BAY IN 1746

by Henry Ellis

Henry Ellis was an agent of Arthur Dobbs, the most active critic of the Hudson's Bay Company in the eighteenth century. In 1746, he was sent on an expedition with the Dobbs Galley *and* California, *to search for a northwest passage. The two ships wintered in the Hayes River near York Factory, and Ellis was thus given an opportunity to make the observations recorded in his book. In a subsequent article, extracts will be reprinted from his remarks on the Eskimos of Hudson Strait and Bay.*

A

VOYAGE

TO

HUDSON'S-BAY,

BY THE

Dobbs Galley and *California*,

In the Years 1746 and 1747,

For Diſcovering a

NORTH WEST PASSAGE;

WITH

An accurate Survey of the Coaſt, and a ſhort Natural Hiſtory of the Country.

TOGETHER WITH

A fair View of the Facts and Arguments from which the future finding of ſuch a Paſſage is rendered probable.

By *HENRY ELLIS*, Gent.

Agent for the Proprietors in the ſaid Expedition.

To which is prefixed,

An Hiſtorical Account of the Attempts hitherto made for the finding a Paſſage that Way to the *Eaſt-Indies*.

Illuſtrated with proper Cuts, and a new and correct Chart of *Hudſon's-Bay*, with the Countries adjacent.

LONDON:

Printed for H. WHITRIDGE, at the *Royal Exchange*.

M.DCC.XLVIII.

The title page in Ellis's book, printed in 1748.

The Indians

FROM this long account of the severity of their winters, it is natural for my readers to conclude this country, the most uncomfortable in the world, and it's inhabitants the most unhappy. But in fact however, they are very far from it. If the weather is cold they have abundance of beaver-skins to clothe them, and many other conveniencies, that put them in some measure, at least, on a level, with those who live in a milder clime.

But what in this respect will appear much more extraordinary, I dare assert, that people from Europe, who have lived here for some years, prefer it to all other places, and when they leave it, and come home with the ships, they grow tired in a few months, of a more moderate climate, and wish with impatience for the proper season, that may give them an opportunity of revisiting these frozen regions.

The natives of this land are of a middle size, copper colour, with black eyes, and long lank hair of the same colour, but their features vary as in Europe. They are of a chearful disposition, good-natured, affable, friendly and honest in their dealings. They live in tents covered with moose, and deer-skins sewed together; as their time is spent chiefly in hunting, fishing and fowling, they change their habitations, according, as they find the game plenty or scarce.

They do not live in any great numbers together, for the same reason; because it would be more difficult to provide necessaries to feed and clothe them, therefore they have no body of laws to regulate their conduct; but are influenced in their behaviour, by a natural rectitude of disposition, that restrains them from all acts of violence and injustice one to another, as effectually as the most rigid laws could. The chiefs in every family or tribe, who generally speaking are chose from amongst the most ancient of the people, but chiefly for their skill in hunting and experience in trade, domestick affairs, or valour in war, which they often wage with the Eskimaux; direct those who reside with them in their different employments of hunting, fowling, fishing, etc., yet their advice is followed rather through deference than obligation, for, in point of exemption from power, they may be truly called a free people.

They have no dependance upon the fruits of the earth for their subsistence, living entirely on the animals they take in hunting or trapping, at which they are very dexterous. They make prodigious slaughter every season among the deer [caribou], from an unaccountable notion that the more they destroy, the greater plenty will succeed; therefore sometimes they leave three or four hundred dead on the plain, taking out of them only their tongues, and leaving their carcasses either to rot, or be devoured by the wild beasts. At other times they attack them in the water, and kill prodigious numbers, which they bring down on floats to the factories. These creatures cross a vast extent of country, from south to north, in the spring of the year, in order to bring forth their young in places of safety; that is, in the more northerly parts, which are either entirely uninhabited, or at least but very thinly planted.

In their route thither, they are extremely tormented with large gnats and muskettoes, with which this country, during the little summer it enjoys, is greatly infested. This causes the deer to take to the rivers and lakes for shelter, and gives the Indians a greater opportunity of killing them. It would be very hard to account whence such infinite numbers of these insects should come so suddenly as they do, or how they are propagaged, did not experience shew, that they survive the winter, or rather remain in a kind of lifeless state, from which the return of the warm season recovers them. I will mention a very plain instance, in order to shew the truth of this.

A certain person in the winter-time, crossing a small creek, upon a tree that lay over it, happened to slip his foot on one side, by which he broke from the tree a black lump, that on examination he found to be nothing else but a vast mass of musketoes,* froze together, this he brought to a fire, which thawing the vital juices in these insects, they presently began to move. After that, carrying them out into the freezing air, they as quickly resumed their former senseless state, and no methods could afterwards restore them to life. Without all doubt, many other animals that disappear in the winter are reduced to the same numbed and inactive condition. I shall strengthen this by just mentioning a fact, that is very well known to the English, who reside in the Northern Settlements of America, which is, that by the sides of lakes, in banks or holes, at the roots of trees, are often found in the winter, frogs that are froze in such a manner, that their flesh has been as hard as common ice, yet these frogs being thawed by a gentle heat, recover life so as to be able to crawl about, but suddenly freezing them again, they become irrecoverable, in the same manner, as is before reported of the musketoes.†

The Indians live not only on the flesh of animals they kill in hunting, but on that also of birds of passage; such as swans, wild geese, ducks, plover, and many other of that kind that go to the northward in the spring to breed, and return to the southward in autumn, and others also, such as eagles, crows, owls, hawks and gulls, likewise upon partridges and pheasants, which stay in the winter. Their flesh in general they boil and eat by itself, and then drink the water it was boiled in, which they esteem very wholesome. In like manner they dress their fish, of which they have some variety, and very good; up the rivers and lakes, they have large sturgeon, carp, trout, pike, and two very delicious kinds of fish; the one called by the French, white fish, but by the Indians and English, *titymagg;* the other resembling an eel, but spotted with yellow and white, called by the natives *muthoy* [*methy*, the ling or loach]. These are reckoned fattest in the winter-time, when they are caught by making holes in the ice; where, on letting down a baited hook, the fish greedily take it.

At the mouths of the rivers, especially those more to the north, are plenty of fine salmon, trout, and another which is a tolerable good fish resembling a carp, called a sucker, and there also comes in with the flood tide, in great numbers of white whales, which might easily be taken, and large profits made of their oil. Seals too frequent these coasts, but in no great numbers, except as far north, as Lat. 60°.

The clothing of the men here in summer, is a loose coat, made of blanket, which they buy either from the French or English settled in their neighbourhood; a pair of leather stockings, which come so high, as to serve for breeches; they make shoes also of the same materials. The womens clothes differ from the mens only in this, they generally wear a petticoat, that comes a little lower than their knees, in the winter. Their ordinary apparel is of the skin of the deer, otter or beaver, with the hair or fur on; the sleeves of their upper habit, are frequently separate from the body, and taken on and off at pleasure, being only tied with strings at the shoulders; so that their arm-pits, even in the depth of winter, are exposed to the cold, which they reckon contributes to their health.

Their affection for their children is singularly great. An extraordinary instance of this happened lately at York-Fort. Two small canoes, passing Hayes's River, when they had got to the middle of it, one of them, which was made of the bark of a birch tree, sunk, in which was an Indian, his wife and child: The other canoe being small, and incapable of receiving more than one of the parents, and the child, produced a very extraordinary contest between the man and his wife, not but that both of them were willing to devote themselves to save the other, but the difficulty lay in determining which would be the greatest loss to the

One of the plates from Ellis's book. These birds, he says, sometimes appeared on the menu of the Indians who traded at York Factory.

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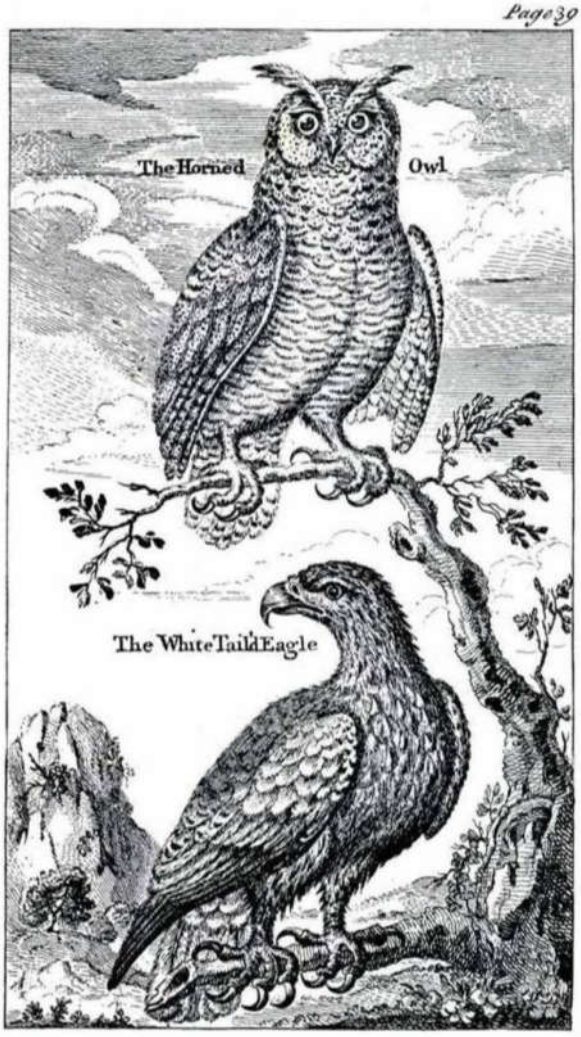


*Probably *culex pipiens.*

†Many cold-blooded animals will live for long periods if frozen when their tissues are properly prepared. Sudden thawing and freezing injures the tissues and results in death.

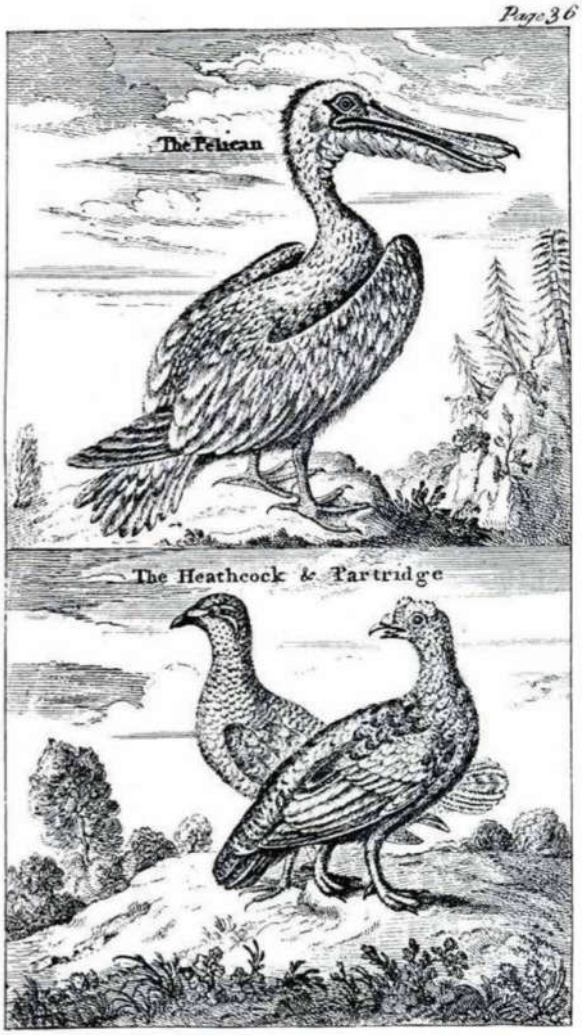
child. The man used many arguments to prove it more reasonable, that he should be drowned, than the woman. But she alleged on the contrary, it was more for the advantage of the child, that she should perish, because he, as a man, was better able to hunt; and, consequently, to provide for it. The little time there was still remaining, was spent in mutual expressions of tenderness, the woman strongly recommending, as for the last time, to her husband, the care of her child. This being done, they took leave in the water; the woman quitting the canoe was drowned, and the man with the child got safe ashore, and is now taken much notice of by the people thereabouts. Upon the whole it appears, that the single object in view, was the preservation of their child; for tho' the man offered to sacrifice himself, it may be very well supposed it was more for the sake of the child than of the woman; because on other occasions they behave with no great respect to the sex.

It is looked upon as a great offence, for the women to stride over the legs of the men when they sit on the ground, and they even think it beneath them to drink out of the same vessel with their wives. One custom they have, which is very extraordinary; that when their parents grow so old, as to be incapable to support themselves by their own labour, they require their children to strangle them, and this is esteemed an act of obedience in their children to perform. The manner of discharging this last duty, is thus, the grave of the old person being dug, he goes into it, and after having conversed and smoaked a pipe, or perhaps drank a dram or two with their children, the old person signifies he is ready; upon which two of the children put a thong about his neck, one standing on one side, and the other opposite to him, pull violently till he is strangled, then cover him with earth, and over that they erect a kind of rough monument of stones. As for such old persons as have no children, they request this office from their friends, tho' in this last case, it is not always complied with.

Birds and Animals

The brown and spotted Heathcock [sharp-tailed grouse], which continues all the year in the countries about Hudson's Bay, is somewhat bigger than an English Partridge, longer bodied, and has a longer tail in proportion. The bill is black, covered with brown feathers; the skin above the eye red; the top of the head, the upper part of the neck, and down the back covered with feathers of a dark brown, mixed with a dull orange and ash colour; the tail is of a dark brown, the throat under the bill of a yellowish white, the neck and breast of a dull orange, with spots in the form of half-moons of black; the breast and under the body of the bird to the tail white clouded with cream colour, spotted with black half-moons; the legs from the knee-joint down to the feet covered with a kind of hairy feathers of a brown colour, intermixed with black; the feet of a reddish brown; and three toes forward having claws pretty long and black; these toes are jagged, but the hinder toes are smooth on the sides. It is remarkable, that these birds are inhabitants of the low country in those parts, tho' the same species with us are only found in very high lands, and on the tops of mountains.

The white Partridge [Willow Ptarmigan] is of a middle size, between our common partridge and the pheasant, shaped very much like the former, except that its tail is somewhat longer. In the summer season these



Another of Ellis's illustrations. The heathcock is our sharp-tailed grouse, and the partridge is our willow ptarmigan.

birds are mostly brown, but in the winter they become perfectly white, except the outward feathers of the tail, which are black tipped with white. In that severe season they repose themselves in the snow all night, and in the morning fly directly up to shake off the snow. In the middle of the day they sun themselves, and feed only in the mornings and evenings. They breed and continue in those parts all the year, which is a great relief to such as inhabit that country. But after all, as the ingenious and accurate Mr. Edwards observes, this bird is not properly a partridge, but of that kind which we call the heath game, and is common to America and Europe, being found in the mountains of Italy, Switzerland, Spain, &., but no where in such plenty as in the regions about Hudson's Bay.

The Pelican is also common in this country, which is somewhat bigger than a large tame goose; the upper mandible of the bill is narrower in the middle than at either end, and is received into the lower, except towards the point, which widens and receives the lower into it; the point is red, but the upper and under part towards the head, are of a yellow colour; the pouch when dry, resembles an ox's bladder blown, and is prodigiously large while the creature is living; the head and neck are covered with white feathers, the body

of a dirty ash colour, the quills of the wings are black, all the under part is of a dark ash colour, the legs are short, with four toes, webbed together, the middle toe is longer than the leg, and both the legs and feet are of a dirty yellow, mixed with green; the claws are dark. These birds live chiefly upon fish, and are thought to inhabit most parts of the globe; at least, it is certain that they are common here, and in the northern parts of Russia: they likewise abound in Egypt, and are sometimes found near the Cape of Good Hope, where they are of a much larger size; one that was publickly shewn here, and brought from thence, being twice as big as a large swan, and the pouch under the bill so large, that his keeper with great ease put his head into it.

There are likewise in this country some very curious birds, with respect to their size and strength; such as white tailed eagles, about the bigness of a turkey-cock, flat crowned, short necked, full breasted, with brawny thighs, and having very long and broad wings, in proportion to it's body, but darker on the back, and lighter on the sides; the breast spotted with white, the quills of the wings black, the tail when closed white, both above and below, except the very tip of the feathers, which are black or brown, the thighs covered with dark brown feathers, thro' which, in some places, a white

Ellis's illustrations are hardly as accurate as his descriptions.

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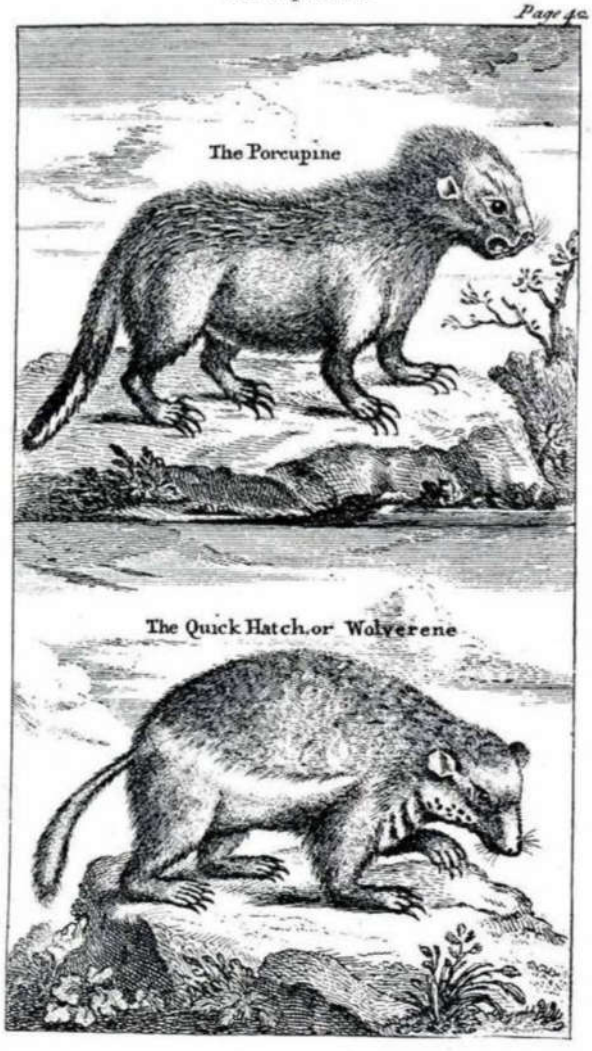


down appears, the legs to the very feet covered with soft feathers of a reddish brown; it has four toes on each foot, very thick and strong, standing three forward and one backward, covered with yellow scales, and armed with very strong claws, of a shining black, with very sharp points; there are besides these, several kinds of falcons or hawks, and other birds of prey. The great horned owl is also common in this country, which is a very singular bird, with a head very little inferior in size to that of a cat, and what are called the horns, composed of feathers, rising just above the bill, intermixed at the bottom with white, becoming of a red brown by degrees, and tipped with black. The great white owl, of a bright shining colour, so as scarce to be distinguished from the snow, is common here likewise, and continues the whole year through in this country, where it is frequently seen flying by day, and preys upon the white partridge.

There are also some beasts, that are singular enough, and are generally esteemed peculiar to this country, such as the white bear, a creature very different from the common bear; having a long head, and a neck much thinner than other creatures of that kind: It is said to make a noise, not unlike the barking of a dog that is hoarse: There are different sizes, great and small; their hair is long and soft as wool; and their noses and mouths are black, and so are their claws; they swim from one field of ice to another, and dive under water for a long time. Near the sea coast, they feed chiefly upon dead whales; but on shore, on any thing they can get.

The Porcupine of Hudson's Bay resembles in shape and size a beaver; the head is not unlike that of a rabbit; it has a flat nose, entirely covered with short hair; the teeth before, two above, and two below, are of a yellow colour, and remarkably strong; it has very small short ears, which hardly appear without the fur; the legs too are very short, but the claws, of which it has four on it's fore feet, and five on the hind, are long, hollow within, like scoops, and very sharp pointed. It is covered all over the body with a pretty soft furr, about four inches long; beneath the hair, on the upper part of the head, body and tail, it is very thick, set with sharp stiff quills, which are white, with black points, bearded [barbed], and not easily drawn out, when they have entered the skin. The porcupine usually makes its nest under the roots of great trees, and sleeps much; he feeds chiefly upon the bark of trees, eats snow in the winter, and drinks water in the summer, but carefully avoids going into it. The savages eat them, and esteem their flesh both a wholsome and a pleasant food.

The Quick-hatch or Wolverene is another very extraordinary beast of the size of a large wolf; the snout of the upper and under jaw, as far as the eyes, is black, the upper part of the head whitish, the eyes dark; the throat, and under part of the neck, white spotted with black; the ears small and round; the whole body of a reddish brown, darker at the shouders and rump, and lighter upon the back and sides. The furr of the whole body is pretty long, but not very close, the feet, as far as the first joint, are covered with short black hair, but the legs are brown and the claws of a light colour, the tail is most of it brown, but towards the tip bushy and black. This creature in going carries his head very low, so that his back rises archwise; when attacked, he defends himself with great force and obstinacy, and it is said, will tear traps, ginns, and other such inventions to pieces, in a very surprizing manner.

"His second shot brought to an abrupt stop the bull's headlong pursuit."

A RACE FOR LIFE

By W. Bleasdell Cameron

THE days when, from the Red River of the North to the foothills of the Rocky Mountains, the Canadian West was a land of savage splendour —a vast verdant sea sweeping league on league to dim horizons—with the onward march of the years are receding farther and farther into the past, and those who breathed their glamour and romance are few, and rapidly becoming fewer. Soon even these will have entered the silence, and only on the printed page will the West that was still live.

But through the lips of one here and there of that swiftly vanishing handful it is yet possible upon occasion to catch glimpses of those stirring, departed days. Such a one is Mrs. McKay, who at the age of ninety-odd makes her home near Prince Albert. Mrs. McKay is the widow of that stout-hearted frontiersman, William McKay, one of the famous Hudson's Bay Company family of that name, a veteran Indian trader who closed his eyes only in August of 1930 upon a region he had seen change from a mighty wilderness, over which warring Indian tribes and buffalo in unnumbered thousands roamed at will, into a land sown thickly with towns and carved throughout its broad extent into the pleasant farmsteads of peaceful and industrious settlers.

In these modern days, when little remains of the pioneer past, should one find himself suddenly possessed with a burning desire to beard the buffalo on his native heath, it would be necessary for him to journey to one of the government parks at Elk Island or Banff in Alberta. Even then he would have no assurance of excitement; he might find the great shaggy beasts—once the wild and, in some circumstances, dangerous monarchs of the plains—scarcely less tame or more formidable than the animals in a farmer's barnyard. But it was not always so, as Mrs. McKay is able out of her own experience to testify. Some years ago she gave me a vivid account of an adventure of those wild days in which she perforce took an active if unrelished part. She said:

I was a young girl then, my friend, living at Carlton House, the old Hudson's Bay district headquarters post on the North Saskatchewan, where my father, John Rowland, was in the service of the Great Company. Except the traders and a few missionaries, there were as yet no whites in the country. Even Prince Albert, one of the earliest settlements, had still to be born. Outside the stockades of the forts the red men, who were often insolent and unruly, still dominated the land.

It might be supposed that life at the fur posts, especially for the women, was dreary and monotonous, but we did not find it so. On the contrary, the time as a rule passed quickly and happily. Our household duties—including the making of our own clothes—kept us occupied, and for amusement we had dances, snowshoeing, skating and hunting (the latter usually in the winter and for rabbits), riding, berrying and horse- and dog-team racing. Visitors were frequent, too; there was always much travel between the posts. Major Butler, who wrote *The Great Lone Land*—later Sir William F. Butler—stayed with us more than once. And then there were the visits of the Indians, feathered and bedaubed with their brilliant paints, with furs and buffalo robes to trade. No, life at the posts was not dull. It was pleasant, often exciting. For one thing, we were not troubled, as in these difficult days, over money matters.

I had one ambition that, until I was almost full grown, I was unable to gratify. I had for long wished to go out to the plains to see a buffalo hunt and to watch the Indian women cutting up the meat and making pemmican, but I had failed to obtain my father's consent.

Attakakoop, "Star Blanket," one of the local chiefs, was a man of much authority, good character and responsibility, held in high esteem by my parent. At length I hit upon the idea of enlisting the aid of the chief. He was leaving with a party of his followers and a train of carts for the country south of Carlton to secure a supply of meat. Him I persuaded to use his influence with my father to let me go along. On Star Blanket's promising that I should be brought safely back, I at last obtained the coveted permission. I was delighted.

But Attakakoop did not know the risk he ran in undertaking to return me in good repair to Carlton. I was certain of being returned, of course, but as it turned out I might easily have arrived without knowing anything about it.

We were headed for the Point of Woods, a lofty, grass-grown plateau studded with poplar clumps and sparkling blue lakes, which jutted out into the plain about half way between the present town of Battleford and the Eagle Creek. It was an ideal campground.

We journeyed along, living on the fat of the land (the country was full of game—blacktail deer, antelope, Canada geese, wavies, sandhill cranes and prairie chickens) until we reached a point opposite where the city of Saskatoon now stands, though west of the South Saskatchewan river and some distance from that stream. The country here was very dry, and water scarce, but one of the Indians told us of a spring he had once located in a coulee perhaps half a mile away, and I set off with Attakakoop's sister to fetch some. She was an elderly woman and we both stayed in the chief's tent with his family. We carried two-gallon kegs on our shoulders, where they were held by straps passing round our foreheads.

The coulee, when we at last came to it, was wide and deep. We found the spring at the bottom, filled our kegs and began the stiff climb back. At the top we paused to recover our breath and rest.

The view—the vast shimmering plain drowsing in the sunlight; in the far distance a dark mass—a great herd of buffalo grazing—held me and I stood for some moments bewitched. A sharp exclamation from the old woman awoke me.

"Look out, my sister! He is wounded, that one." A moment's pause, then: "Run—*run*!"

I looked round quickly. I was wearing a red shawl. An immense buffalo bull a few hundred yards away was staring belligerently at me, now and then tossing his great shaggy head and pawing the ground. As I stared back at him, paralysed with fright, he suddenly lowered his head and charged.

"Run, O run, my sister!" shrieked the old woman. "I'm too old, I can't; but you may get away. If he is overtaking you, give him your shawl—throw it down!"

I had dropped my keg. I recovered my wits. I acted on the old woman's advice and ran—for my life! I ran till I thought my heart would burst. But it was of no use. The bull gained. He had plunged right over the old woman without ever seeing her. I flung off my shawl. The animal stopped, ripped it to pieces with his horns, trampled it under foot. Then he again rushed after me.

I had had a brief breathing space and I tore on, but he was soon again overtaking me. Hope died in me. Once more I was ready to drop. I fell. I closed my eyes. My

Star Blanket is the Indian with the feathered stick. The others are, left to right, standing: Ohoo, Star Blanket's brother; Red Dog, Star Blanket's son; Day Walker, Pointed Cap's son. Sitting: Stoney, an Indian doctor; Pointed Cap, who refused to dress up in anything more colourful than a blanket capote; Buffalo Bow; Mustatik, son-in-law of Pointed Cap.

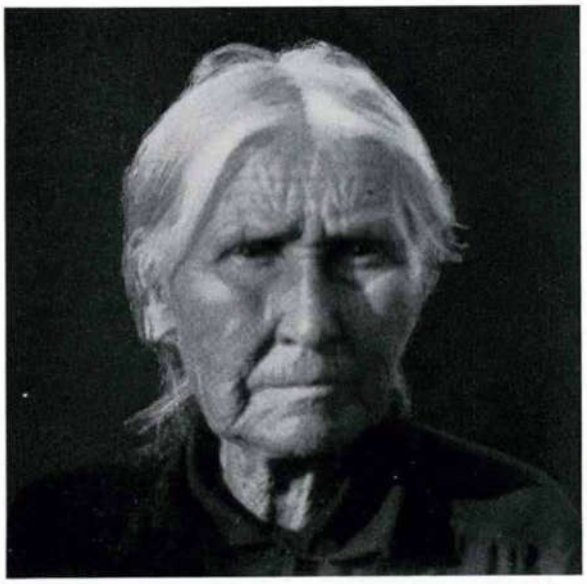
lips moved in anguished prayer as I awaited the doom that was thundering down upon me. How could I ever forget those short swift seconds of suspense!

Then—a shout!—and, instantly following—a shot! What, *what* could it mean? I took courage, then, and raised my eyes—to see the great beast crash to the ground a few feet behind me!

I shook in every limb. A mounted man stood over me, a half-breed hunter, Diomme Laboucan. He had from a distance seen the bull and my frantic race and, beating a tattoo on the ribs of his trained buffalo-runner, had arrived just in the nick of time to save my life. His second shot had brought to an abrupt stop the bull's headlong pursuit.

At length I was able to move and, after thanking my rescuer haltingly out of a full heart, I rejoined the old woman. Then we picked up our kegs and made our way back to camp.

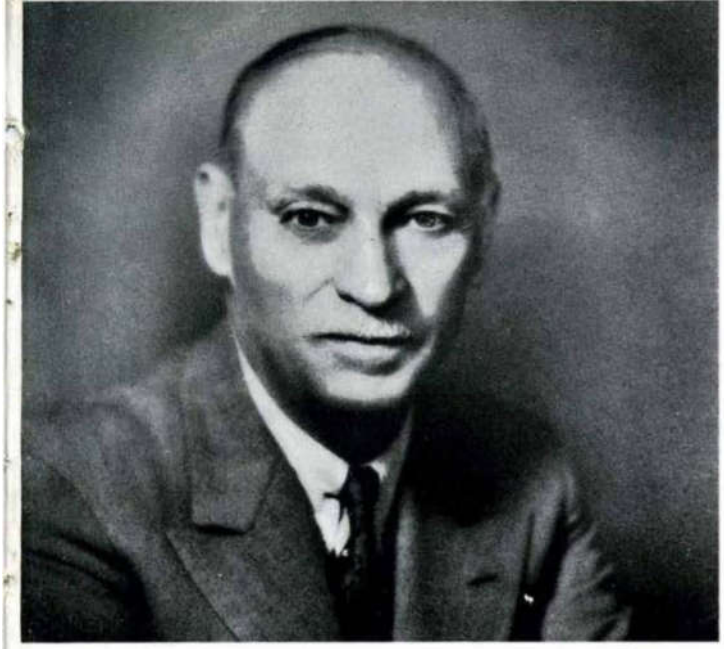
On arriving home some weeks later, with carts groaning under heaped-up loads of buffalo meat and pemmican, Attakakoop and his followers decided that, in gratitude to Manito for saving from a violent death the daughter of the white *Okemow*, nothing less than a grand celebration would serve properly to mark such a thrilling event. This duly came off. Over the centre pole of the big open lodge erected for the occasion floated fragments of the shawl, the flashing challenge of which had so maddened the wounded bull. Following the feasting and the shuffling of the warriors in the grass dance, the weird wild quaver in the voices of the drummers marking the time in the measured boom of the big drum, Attakakoop made a speech in which in glowing terms he lauded what he was pleased to call my "bravery." In turn I was asked to recount to the assembled tribesmen the details of my race and escape from the enraged bull, which I did in the best Cree at my command. At the same time I was thinking that it was Laboucan's resourcefulness and action in flying to my rescue that they should have been celebrating rather than my frenzied efforts to travel faster than the bull. It was long past midnight when the celebration ended.



Mrs. William McKay in later life. W. B. Cameron.

Incidentally, my father did not think much of it all. I was told very pointedly that any more such excursions and adventures were definitely "out." He left me to infer what dire consequences would follow any infraction of this edict.

Fort Carlton after the palisade had been demolished. R.C.M.P.



DR. CAMSELL RETIRES

WITH the retirement of Dr. Charles Camsell from his position as Deputy Minister of the Department of Mines and Resources, the public service of Canada loses one of its most distinguished members. Dr. Camsell's long association with the great northwestern areas of this country—he was born at Fort Liard, N.W.T.—brought to his administrative tasks an understanding both broad and minute, and a perspective relating to the development of Canada's new North such as perhaps were at the command of no other citizen of North America. It is not remarkable that his voice was regarded, not only in Canada but in other countries, as the voice of authority in all matters having to do with administration and development of Canada's northland.

Few administrative officers of the Federal Government have touched as closely the field of interest to the Hudson's Bay Company as has Dr. Camsell. The area to the west of Hudson Bay, outside of the organized provinces, has been his special care. It is an empire in itself, and for long has been recognized as one of the chief sources of raw furs for the world's market. The part of the Company in fostering these resources and turning them to the advantage of the natives of the region and the general public economy of Canada has been paralleled during the period of his administration by Dr. Camsell's wise and sympathetic understanding of the problems peculiar to Northern Canada.

As has already been said, Charles Camsell was born at Fort Liard, N.W.T., on the Liard River. The date was February 8, 1876. His father was Captain Julian Stewart Camsell, chief factor, Hudson's Bay Company, and his mother was Sarah (Foulds) Camsell, of Winnipeg, Manitoba. While a young lad Charles was sent to Winnipeg for his education; he attended St. John's College and Manitoba University, from which he graduated with his B.A. degree in 1894. He received his LL.D. at Queen's in 1922; his LL.D. at Alberta in 1929; and his LL.D. at Manitoba University in 1936. He also took postgraduate courses in geology at Queen's University, at Harvard University, and at Massachusetts Institute of Technology at Boston. Dr. Camsell thus supplemented natural ability with an unusual amount of specialized training.

Between 1894 and 1900, Charles Camsell engaged in travel and exploration throughout the basin of the Mackenzie River and the region west to the Pacific Coast. Along with Dr. J. M. Bell, he made a geological exploration of Great Bear Lake in 1900, and Moose River basin on James Bay in 1901. The following year he explored the wood buffalo country between Peace River and Great Slave Lake, and in 1903 served as geologist with the Canadian Northern Railway Company. In 1904 he joined the permanent staff of the Geological Survey and made explorations of the Severn River in Ontario, and in 1905 explored the Stewart and Peel Rivers in the Yukon, crossing from Dawson to the mouth of the Mackenzie River.

Already he had acquired a vast knowledge of Canada's hinterland, but following years were to extend still further the range of his experience. The years from 1906 to 1913 he spent working on economic geological problems in south-western British Columbia. In 1914, and following years, in charge of exploratory work for the Geological Survey, he made explorations of the country between Athabasca and Great Slave Lake, putting Talston River on the map. In 1918 he opened and took charge of the British Columbia office of the Geological Survey.

In 1920 Dr. Camsell was appointed Deputy Minister of the Dominion Department of Mines. When that department, along with others, was combined in the larger Department of Mines and Resources in 1936, Dr. Camsell was appointed deputy minister of the new department. He was also appointed commissioner of the Northwest Territories—a position for which those who read even this brief sketch of his career must grant he was exceptionally qualified.

Honours, aside from government positions, gravitated toward him, bearing tribute to the esteem in which he was held in the world of science and of exploration. He was selected as a representative of Canada at Imperial Conferences in London and Ottawa, in 1923, '26, '30, and '32. He was Canadian representative at the Empire Mining and Metallurgical Congress in South Africa, 1930, and headed the Canadian delegation to the World Power Conference in Berlin the same year.

The list of his presidencies, vice-presidencies, and fellowships is far too long to give here; but it may be said that he was president of the Royal Society of Canada, 1930-1 and of the Engineering Institute of Canada, 1932; vice-president of the 12th International Geological Congress, 1913, and of the Geological Society of America, 1937; and gold medallist, Institute of Mining and Metallurgy, London, 1930.

So Dr. Charles Camsell, C.M.G., B.A., LL.D., F.R.S.C., F.G.S.A., F.R.G.S., etc., retires from an active and fruitful life written large in the exploration and development of Canada; but his experience and wisdom will continue to be available to his country, particularly through his position as commissioner of the Northwest Territories. Undoubtedly, too, he will continue to be in demand for delivering addresses to learned bodies, and contributions from his pen will be wanted by authoritative magazines. Men like Dr. Camsell never rust out; they are of a metal which never loses its lustre.

The first parachute jump to be made in the Canadian Arctic, November 4, 1943.

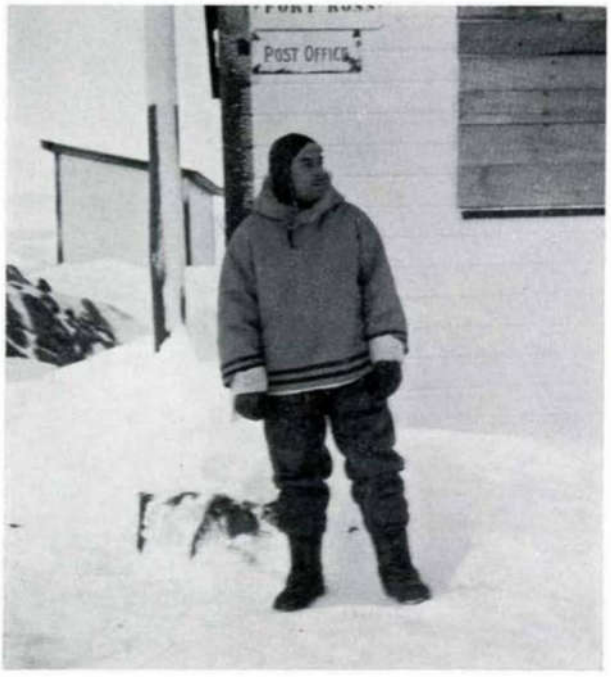
The parachutist, Capt. J. F. Stanwell-Fletcher, being helped out of his harness by a Fort Ross native.

HISTORIC SNAPSHOTS

by Barbara Heslop

The pictures on this page were taken in November 1943, but have only recently been received from the North. They illustrate the first parachute jump ever made in the Canadian Arctic, during the Fort Ross rescue flight. Other photos taken by Mrs. Heslop on this occasion were published in *The Beaver* two years ago, but the film from which these snaps were selected was left at Fort Ross and not recovered until the Nascopie's return there in 1944. The Heslops are now at Cape Smith.

Capt. Stanwell-Fletcher arrives at Fort Ross. The windows were boarded up while the post was closed.



One of the bales of supplies for the Eskimos with its yellow parachute lands on Hazard Inlet.

Beaver Scoops

Time magazine, in its issue of 31st December, reproduced L. A. Learmonth's attractive picture of the three Coppermine girls from our December issue, and referred to the Arctic fur show as a scoop for *The Beaver*—"A little-known Canadian magazine. . . . (Circ. 15,000)."

The Winnipeg press reprinted the picture of the Jap bomb from the same issue and retold the discovery of a similar bomb at Oxford House. They also pointed out that we had scooped the daily press on this choice item of "news."

The Toronto *Globe and Mail* found Mr. de Wet's article so interesting that they reprinted a long condensation of it by Sidney Norman headlined "Beaver Magazine Features Story of Mining North."

The result of all this publicity showed in a record number of new subscriptions. Fully paid subscriptions from people outside the Company now stand at 6,903 —3,990 Canadian, 2,913 U.S.

HBRS

Now that the publication business in Britain is on its way back to normal, we may look for a more regular appearance of the Hudson's Bay Record Society books. Only one volume had appeared when war came, and ever since then the selections of material for these books, as well as the editing and printing, have been carried on under the greatest difficulties. The result has been that each annual volume has not made its appearance until several months after it was scheduled to reach the members. But the members, realizing perhaps that they were fortunate to be receiving any volumes at all from a country given up so completely to the war effort, forbore to complain.

Before long, we should like to publish an article describing the difficulties under which those who were responsible for the production of these volumes were obliged to labour. Mr. Rich, the general editor, was in the Army most of the time, and much of his service was spent in the Middle East. Miss Johnson, of the Hudson's Bay Archives Department, had to work on records distributed between London and Hexton, where the bulk of the archives was kept—almost inaccessibly —in the basement of the Governor's house. For the writing of the introductions to the McLoughlin series, a constant flow of correspondence and proofs had to be kept up between Miss Johnson in London, Col. Rich in Cairo, and Dr. Lamb in Vancouver. And the printers and binders in Scotland of course had plenty of troubles too. The wonder is, in fact, not that the books were late, but that the whole project was not shelved in despair until the end of the war.

The next two volumes to appear both deal with the minutes of the Hudson's Bay Company—the first from 1679-82 and the next from 1682-84.

Sweater

The article on the Cowichan sweater in the last issue has brought a lot of enquiries as to where they can be obtained. The author, Miss Norcross, has sent us a clipping about the formal presentation of one of these sweaters to President Truman by the people of Cowichan. They had read in the press that the President, while out fishing with Governor Walgren of Washington, had borrowed the latter's Cowichan sweater, and they thought he certainly should have one of his own. So now he has. The presentation was made at a colourful ceremony in Duncan, with Troy L. Perkins, the U.S. Consul in Victoria, receiving the gift on behalf of his President.

H B C Museum

Despite the fact that the usual overhaul of the Museum was not carried out last spring, except for the changing of the first part to emphasize the 275th anniversary, another record was chalked up in 1945. Last year for the first time registered attendance at the Museum topped the 50,000 mark. This means to say that about 150,000 people visited the historical exhibit in the course of the twelve months. These figures do not take into account the vast numbers of children who visit the Museum on their own. It is also remarkable that seven of the twelve months showed record attendances.

Flying Savages

Robert A. Logan, who took the picture of J. D. Craig on page 23 of the September *Beaver*, writes in to ask if we realized that he and Jack Craig, shown in our Alaska Boundary picture in the same issue, were one and the same man. Of course, when we compared the two, we saw the resemblance; but we certainly had not realized the fact until his letter came.

In connection with the Edmonton article in the September number, Mr. Logan recounted an amusing anecdote of the 1914-18 war. In April 1917 he was piloting a fighter plane for the R.A.F. His observer was Lt. Reg Henry, the son of a former Mayor of Edmonton, and in honour of that city they named their aircraft *Amisk Watche Waskahekan*—the Cree Indian name for Fort Edmonton. This they printed in Cree syllabics on the fuselage of their plane.

In due course they were forced down behind the German lines; and when the Jerries saw the barbaric hieroglyphics, and heard the airmen's non-British accents, they concluded excitedly that they had brought down the first of the North American savages which were being sent in hordes to scalp them.

Beaver Restoration

This magazine is always interested in the use of the beaver as a symbol. Though it has never been officially designated as such, the beaver has been accepted for many years as the unofficial faunal emblem of Canada, just as the maple leaf has become the floral emblem. It was a matter for regret when in 1929 that essentially Canadian institution, the Canadian Pacific Railway, removed the little animal engineer from the trademark shield where he had crouched for forty-four years. And it is equally a matter for congratulation that the railway has now seen fit to restore him to his position of eminence.

The new trademark shows a beaver at work, crowning a shield bearing the words "Canadian Pacific" above a representation of the globe, which carries the slogan "Spans the World." It replaces the old unadorned shield which listed railway, air lines, steamships, communications, express and hotels as the services offered by the company.

Wolf, Wolf!

That hardy old perennial, *fabula lupus*, has made its appearance again in the columns of newspapers across Canada. This time, a certain Harry McLeod, described as a veteran of fifty years' experience in the North, comes out—a little late, it seems—with a tale of wolves killing an Eskimo woman near Lac du Brochet fifty years ago. The age of the story apparently didn't bother the up-to-the-minute daily press a bit, and they played it up with relish from coast to coast—even to the extent of two-column heads.

The story, which carried a date line from The Pas, suggests that Jim Curran, retired editor of the *Sault Daily Star*, will now have to pay up that $100 he has offered since 1925 to anyone who could prove an unprovoked attack by wolves in Canada. The weak spots in this suggestion are: (*a*) Mr. Curran limited the locale of the attack to the District of Algoma, and (*b*) Mr. McLeod cannot possibly prove his story.

The trouble with all these wolf stories is that they always happen to somebody else. The person who was there at the time, or who saw the remains of the carnage after the marauders had departed, can somehow never be found. Mr. McLeod is also reported to have recalled for the press a later incident at Montreal Lake, in which a pack of about forty wolves treed a lone trapper. The report goes on to say that, after the trapper had shot twelve of them, the other twenty-eight gave up the chase as a bad job and departed. Isn't it Ernest Thompson Seton who points out that North American wolves seldom run in packs larger than five, and that the largest pack ever counted by a reliable witness was ten?

Anyway, we are quite sure that Mr. Curran would be safe in extending his bet to cover Montreal Lake, Lac du Brochet, and points north and west. The risks that northerners run of being attacked by wolves are certainly much less than those run by city dwellers of being attacked by dogs. For after all, when dog bites man, that's not news; but when wolf bites man—even fifty years ago—it obviously is.

Contributors

Most of the contributors to this issue are already well known to our readers. J. W. ANDERSON, manager of the Ungava Section, is known best for his annual accounts of the *Nascopie* trip in each December issue. But his service with the Fur Trade has been spent largely in the James Bay country, where he joined the Company as an apprentice clerk at Moose Factory in 1910. . . . GUY H. BLANCHET was a government surveyor from 1910 to 1945, with interruptions. His surveys included the Athabaska River and the west end of Lake Athabaska, where Fort Chipewyan is situated. . . . W. P. JOHNSTON is manager of the Company's post at Fort Resolution. He has been in the Fur Trade for eighteen years. . . . W. KAYE LAMB, Ph.D., is librarian of the University of British Columbia. Formerly Provincial Archivist at Victoria, he is one of the top historians of the Pacific coast. He is perhaps most widely known as the author of the masterly introductions to the three volumes of McLoughlin's letters published by the Hudson's Bay Record Society. . . . L. A. LEARMONTH, the Company's Western Arctic Section inspector (whose Beaver photo in the last issue was the first to make *Time*) has travelled widely by dog team and boat in the Arctic, and probably knows the Western Arctic as well as any man living. . . . D. B. MARSH, Archdeacon of Aklavik, was Archdeacon of Baffinland when he took the pictures of the drum dance at Eskimo Point, where he spent several years among the Padlemiuts. . . . EDWIN MILLS, of Hamilton, Ontario, seems to write, take pictures, catch fish, and sell insurance with equal facility. The Albany-Ogoki region is a favourite angling ground of his. . . . J. W. NICHOLS, one of the veterans of the Fur Trade, has seen service in the Eastern Arctic and along the Mackenzie since 1913.

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